A Free Press in a Free Society?

American Post-Vietnam Military Public-Affairs Strategies and Their Influence on Press Coverage

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To my grandfather who taught me the importance of asking questions,
my grandmother who makes sure that I never leave the house hungry, and my mom and dad for all their love and support.

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Introduction

Ever since the days of the early pioneers, journalists have battled with governmental and military restrictions when searching for, gathering, or publishing information about American military operations. When the colonies were under British rule, newspapers were under heavy restrictions and were constantly monitored by officials employed by the British throne. The first multi-paged newspaper published in the colonies was *Publick Occurrences, Both Forreign and Domestick* in Massachusetts. In its first issue, published on September 25 1690, the editor, Benjamin Harris, labelled Great Britain's ally, the Native Americans, "miserable savages". Harris' negative remark was perceived as criticism of Massachusetts' colonial policy which, as Michael Emery explains, focused in 1690 on winning and not alienating the Native Americans.[1] The newspaper was shut down by the Governor and Council of Massachusetts.[2]

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, a wave of liberalism had taken root in the colonies. Jeffrey A. Smith cites Bernard Bailyn's work on the American Revolution.[3] Bailyn argues that *Cato's Letters*, published in British newspapers in the 1720's, greatly influenced the way in which people living in the colonies regarded governmental power. The letters stated that the government only existed to serve the people and that freedom of expression gave the people the information they needed to evaluate the performance of people elected to official governing positions.[4] This idea of considering the government a servant of the people was put into action when the colonies declared their independence from Great Britain in 1776, but when the U.S. Constitution was adopted by the Constitutional Convention in 1787, there was no mention of freedom of expression. Richard Davis states that the Founding Fathers had deemed a freedom of expression clause unnecessary because the enumerated powers of the central government did not include powers to violate rights such as freedom of the press. In 1787, freedom of expression clauses had already been incorporated into nine of the fourteen state constitutions. For example, the Virginia Bill of Rights of 1776 stated, "That freedom of the press is one of the great bulwarks of liberty, and can never be restrained but by despotic governments."[5] It soon became apparent that many of the states would refuse to ratify the Constitution if it did not include a freedom of expression clause. The state of Virginia could not gather enough votes for ratification until Governor Edmund Randolph asked the Founding Fathers to add a Bill of Rights.[6] As a result, freedom of speech and of the press were included in the First Amendment in the American Constitution's Bill of Rights.[7]

The First Amendment states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; **or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press**."[8] The press was therefore able to scrutinize governmental officials and their actions without being censored or shut down as Benjamin Harris was in 1690. Christopher Paul cites Herbert N. Foerstel's book, *Freedom of Information and the Right to Know: The Origins and Applications of the Freedom of Information Act,* which quotes Wallace Parks. Parks believes that the First Amendment made the press a watchdog and a check on the three branches of the government. He also argues that journalists have to act as a check on the government because the American people have a "right to know" what their own government is involved in at all times.[9] The press can influence people's perceptions of a range of topics, and many regards it as "an accessory to the political process." Subsequently, many have nick-named the press a "fourth estate".[10] A free press is one of the cornerstones in a democracy. If people can raise their voice and criticize an elected government's achievements and way of governing without being subjected to reprimands, it becomes increasingly difficult to abuse governmental power. If an elected official does something his or her electors disapprove of, that official might not be re-elected. Newspapers also play an important role in informing people about the state of their country. A poll by the *Pew Research Center* reveals that in 2000, sixty-three percent of people active in politics learned about presidential election campaigns and candidates by reading newspapers.[11]

Especially during wartime it is very important to be informed about what one's government is doing. When a government declares war, it wages war literally in the name of its electors. If the press is placed under restrictions during military operations it cannot, for example, inform citizens about how the operation is progressing, what types of challenges are faced on the battlefield, or how many casualties the operation has produced. If not informed about the true picture of military engagement, citizens might condone further military activity which they might otherwise have objected to if fully informed. Fully informed citizens are better equipped to debate issues and thus better quipped to make decisions which suits their own personal perception and believes.

Jonathan Mermin argues in *Debating War and Peace* that it is often assumed that the ideal of the First Amendment is fulfilled in the U.S.[12] Despite the constitutionally protected right of a free and independent press, various presidents and military bureaucracies have continued to impose different restrictions on the press at wartime. In addition to ensuring a free and independent press, the U.S. Constitution also established a national military to "provide for the common defense" of the newly created republic and Article II, section 8a of

the American Constitution states that "The President shall be the commander in chief of the army and navy of the United States."[13]

Since 1791, the press and the military have thus shared a common goal in that they both seek to protect the U.S. Constitution, but for different reasons and through different means. The press can be regarded as a protector of the American democratic value-system. By evaluating and criticizing governmental actions and decisions, the press ensures that the American people are informed about what their elected governmental officials are doing. The military, on the other hand, protects physical values such as material interests, American soil, and the nation's citizens. Based on this mutual goal of protecting America and all the country entails, it may seem logical for the press and the military to cooperate in a positive environment to ensure the best protection of America as possible. However, even after the incorporation of the Bill of Rights in the American Constitution, this has not been the case at times of military activity.

Since the American Civil War (1861-1865), the government and the military have imposed severe restrictions on the press out on the battlefield. Doris A. Graber and Major Raymond R. Hill Jr. argue that the Civil War can be regarded as the first military engagement during which the press was prevented from collecting and publishing information about the war. President Abraham Lincoln blocked the distribution of newspapers and took control over the telegraph lines transmitting news of the war across the country.[14] In World War I, Congress enacted the Espionage Act which made it illegal to utter, print, write, or publish anything that would cast contempt on or bring the American government and Constitution into disrepute or which demonstrated support for Germany.[15] Graber writes that more than 2000 people, including journalists, were taken to court suspected of having disregarded the Act.[16] Furthermore, during World War II, the press was restricted by both formal government and military censorship, exemplified by President Franklin Roosevelt's decision to establish in December 1941 the Office of Censorship under the First War Powers Act. Up until 1945, the office was authorized to censor mail, cables, newspapers, magazines, films, and broadcasts while the military was authorized to censor news reports. Journalists accepted being censored because if they refused their access to the battlefields would be severely limited.[17] The controversial nature of the Korean War in 1950 made it difficult for the press to write supportive or positive stories about U.S. military involvement. President Harry S. Truman and General Douglas MacArthur (U.S. Army) feared that negative press coverage would influence public opinion about U.S. military engagement in the war and endanger the military's war efforts. All news reports written out on the battlefield had to be cleared by

Army headquarters before being released to the civilian public.[18] As the Vietnam War progressively deteriorated, news reports were highly managed by the Johnson and Nixon administrations. Journalists were not placed under formal censorship, but information about the true state of the war was witheld from the public sphere.[19]

Since Vietnam, journalists seeking to cover U.S. military operations have in varying degrees been subjected to military ground rules and censorship. During the Grenada Invasion (1993), the Panama intervention (1989), the Persian Gulf War (1990-1991), the Somalia intervention (1992-1993), the Haiti intervention (1994), the Bosnia intervention (1995), the Kosovo War (1991), and the Afghanistan War (2001-present), journalists had, to various degrees, a hard time gaining access to newsworthy information. But during the Iraq War in 2003, the Pentagon and the Bush administration, instead of regarding news coverage a liability, allowed journalists to embed with different military units for weeks and months at a time. Being embedded meant that journalists were stationed with a military unit out on the battlefield. For weeks, sometimes for months at a time, journalists lived, slept, and traveled with a particular military unit. Staying out with the units around the clock meant that embeds were stationed at the front lines of battles and could thus report live from the scene or write very detailed articles about the battles. With the help of satellite-telephones, news reports were sent back to the news bureaus in the U.S. within a few minutes.

Hypothesis and Method

Because a free press is one of the cornerstones in a democratic country such as the U.S., this research paper aims to test the following hypothesis: that compared to earlier post-Vietnam military public-affairs strategies, the public-affairs strategy in the invasion phase of the Iraq War allowed the American press at a time of armed conflict to serve as a check on the government and inform the American people about military progress without endangering military operational strategy and security. The paper will also examine why public-affairs strategies have been implemented and what factors have influenced the decision to use the various strategies.

Although the paper examines how the press has experienced and reacted to various military public-affairs strategies, the term “media” will be used whenever covering topics dealing with the media-business as a whole, which in addition to the press includes television and radio broadcasting. For example, when the paper describes the attitude of military personnels to journalists, no distinction will be made between journalists working for newspapers and those working for television. When examining the procedure of embedding

journalists, the term "press embeds" will be used when examining press journalists' experiences. Whenever the paper focuses on a variety of embedded journalists, the term "media embeds" will be used. The first reason for using two terms to describe embeds is that doing so will separate embedded press journalists from embedded journalists working for television or radio stations, which are not the focus of this paper. Second, because the paper seeks to balance the military's view of public-affairs strategy as well as the view of the press, using the term "embeds" alone would create an imbalance between the two points of views, since "embed" is usually regarded as a militaristic term when discussing media-military relations.

To obtain a complete picture of how various military public-affair strategies have influenced news coverage since the Vietnam War, the best solution would unquestionably be to analyze all U.S. military operations between 1975 and 2003. However, due restricition in terms of the length, this research paper will focus on five military operations: the Grenada Invasion (1983), the Persian Gulf War (1990-1991), the Bosnia intervention (1995), the Afghanistan War (2001), and the invasion phase of the Iraq War (2003).

This paper relies on a comparative historical case-study method. The main reason for choosing a comparative case-study as the method applied is that this allows one to follow a theoretical replication design throughout multiple cases.[20] By using theoretical replication, the paper will be able to systematically compare and contrast levels of journalistic access to the battlefields and how various levels have affected the military's operational strategy and security. At the same time, it will be possible to examine how various public-affairs strategies have affected the press's ability to access information and serve as a check on the government during armed conflict. In analyzing various levels of access, the paper will be able explain why the press in some of the five military operations was subjected to restrictive public-affairs strategies while it was less restricted in other operations.[21] A range of different sources can be applied when using a comparative case-study method. Because the five cases cover a time span of twenty years, it will be possible to extract broad and varied points of views regarding how public-affairs strategy affects press coverage and military operational strategy and security.

The paper will rely on a variety of sources from within the media-business, with most emphasis on the press, especially journalists working for *The New York Times* and *Washington Post*. Both newspapers have extensive coverage of foreign affairs and are considered by the world of academia to be newspapers of repute. Newspaper articles, essays, autobiographies, and historical accounts and assessments written by journalists and editors

will serve as primary sources. Individual research-projects, surveys and old interviews will serve as secondary sources when discussing levels of journalistic access and the quality of press coverage. In addition, autobiographies, personal accounts, after action- and lessons learned reports, and articles written by military personnel serve as primary sources when examining military justifications for implementing various public-affairs strategies. Unclassified military documents such as military doctrines and ground rules will also be given extensive attention. Individual military research projects, interviews and surveys will serve as secondary sources.

Structure

Military public-affairs strategies and their effect on operational strategy and security and press coverage is a complex and constantly evolving research area. As this research-paper will show, whenever a new military operation is launched, both journalists and the military face new challenges that need to be solved. Due to the choice of method, the research-paper is divided into five chapters. Chapters 1-4 are written chronologically and each chapter attempts to balanced equally the points of view of the media and military. Chapters 2-4 present three different military public-affairs strategies.

The public-affairs strategy classification-system used in this research-paper has been borrowed from Thomas Rid's excellent book *War and Media Operations* whose main focus is American military strategic innovation. The book outlines a military public-affairs learning curve from Vietnam to Afghanistan and examines whether or not public-affairs lessons learned were implemented in the Iraq War. This research-paper will also examine military public-affairs strategies in post-Vietnam military operations, although on a smaller scale. Instead of focusing solely on strategic innovation in public-affairs as Rid does, this research-paper will also examine how various public-affairs strategies have influenced the press' ability to serve as a check on the government during military engagements. Currently, several works about journalistic restrictions during wartime exists. Christopher Paul's book *Reporters on the Battlefield*, Greg McLaughlin's *The War Correspondent* and Frank Aukofer's *America's Team* are just a few of the works that have been written about the subject. Because this research-paper examines how three explicit military public-affairs strategies have influenced military operational strategy and security and *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* journalists' ability to serve as a check on the government as well as inform the American people about American war engagements, it does not replicate any other previous works.

The first chapter serves as a background chapter. It demonstates the way in which the media and the military came to regard one another as the U.S. gradually became more involved in the Vietnam War during the Johnson presidency. The outcome, a very negative and soured relationship, has served as a foundation for how journalists and military personnel have regarded one another in post-Vietnam military operations in terms of journalistic access to both information and units deployed out in the fields. Part one of the chapter focuses on media-military relations in the years 1950-1967, while part two identifies a negative shift in media-military relations, epitomized by the Tet Offensive in January 1968. Military personnels' perception of media news coverage and journalistic response to an escalating war is presented. The chapter relies heavily on works written by political science professor Daniel C. Hallin, senior historian William M. Hammond, history professor Clarence R. Wyatt, and former war correspondent for *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* Peter Braestrup.

Chapter two examines restrictive military public-affairs strategy. Part one of the chapter focuses on the news blackout imposed by the military during the American-led invasion of Grenada. Five military justifications for imposing the news blackout are presented. The reaction of the press to the blackout and how the blackout affected the American people's "right to know" are extensively discussed. Part two of the chapter show how military public-affairs lessons learned in the Grenada Invasion and a new type of war environment influenced public-affairs strategy and press coverage in the the Persian Gulf War. The chapter relies on works written by researchers Marcia Block and Geoff Mungham, Tapir-fellow Thomas Rid, journalists Peter Braestrup and John J. Fialka, and associate professor of political science and independent defense analyst Pascale Combelles-Siegel.

Chapter three provides an evaluation of experimental military public-affairs strategy in the Bosnia intervention and the Afghanistan War. The first part of the chapter focuses on the Bosnia intervention which was the first U.S. military operations in which the term "embedded" was used in military public-affairs guidelines dealing with the procedure of attaching journalists to military units during war operations. Part two of the chapter discuss the Pentagon's two-fold public-affairs strategy in the Afghanistan War and an evaluation of the way in which journalists and military personnel experienced the embedding-procedure is provided. This evaluation is two-fold as both military personnel and embeds from the *Washington Post* and *The New York Times* do not agree about whether embedding can be considered a success or a failure. Main contributors in the chapter are senior editor Richard J. Newman, Lieutenant Commander Raymundo Villarreal Jr., *Washington Post* journalists Peter Baker, Susan Glasser and Carol Morello, and *The New York Times* journalist Michael Gordon.

Chapter four provides an analysis of the Pentagon's strategic public-affairs strategy in the invasion-phase of the Iraq War. Military strategist and historian Carl Von Clausewitz's "center of gravity"-theory serves as the foundation when discussing the U.S. Department of Defense's *Embedded Media Program.* Both political and military justifications for implementing the program, as well as the program's design, are examined. The chapter also provides an extensive evaluation of the program's successes and failures with regard to press coverage and military operational security and strategy. The terms "in bed" and "Stockholm Syndrome" will serve as a basis for the evaluation. Furthermore, the chapter relies on a wide range of sources, but the following are particularly important: independent researcher Richard K. Wright, *Washington Post* journalists William Branigin and Peter Baker, Thomas Rid, the *Pew Research Center*, and U.S Army and U.S. Marine after action reports.

Chapter five analyzes how a clash between the cultures of the media and the military makes it difficult for journalists and the military to cooperate during a military operation. The clash of cultures serves as a basis for evaluating how restrictive, experimental, and strategic public-affairs strategies have influenced military operational strategy and security and the press' ability to cover the five cases. Two analyses examine how the Pentagon, military commanders, and presidents have used military public-affairs strategies as instruments for improving military reputation and securing political agendas and goals.

Chapter 1

The Foundation: The Vietnam War

1.0 Early Media Coverage of the Vietnam War

According to Clarence R. Wyatt, American media was not particularly interested in U.S. involvement in the continuously escalating conflict in Vietnam between the years 1955-1960.[22] Large American news organizations had few resources invested in the country[23] and news articles that were written from or about Vietnam appeared as rarely "as a cold day hit Saigon."[24] The first American bureau staffed by a correspondent with full-time responsibility for covering Vietnam was established in Saigon in November 1961. By November 1962, the Associated Press, United Press International and *The New York Times* had established permanent news bureaus in South Vietnam.[25] Due to a minimal media presence in Vietnam, journalists had to rely on information provided by the U.S. government when reporting on the escalating conflict. Daniel C. Hallin, Major Paul Ambrose, and Clarence R. Wyatt argue that due to this dependency on government-provided information, most news coverage was very supportive of American intervention in Vietnam up to the mid-1960s because President Dwight D. Eisenhower and President John F. Kennedy wanted to portay American involvement in the war in a positive fashion.[26]

It is easy to criticize journalists for bluntly relying on government-provided information without being critical of its content. What is important to take into consideration when analyzing journalists' largely uncritical view is the very nature of the relationship that existed between journalists and the government during the early stages of the war. In the 1950s, journalists and the government had developed a dependency-relationship with each other. The government used radio broadcasts and the press to communicate with the public, both nationally and internationally. In order to serve as a check on the government as well educating the public about governmental decisions and actions, journalists depended on information covering various issues affecting the American public. They depended on government information in order to write objective professional journalism[27], "journalists depended on their relations with the state to make objectivity work as a practical form of journalism, and objectivity, in turn, was essential to the new role the press was playing as a 'fourth branch of government'."[28] The combination of serving as an objective check on the government while being dependent on the same government for information is not ideal when

covering a war. Not having the ability to provide a breadth of information made it difficult to report about the gradual American involvement in South Vietnam.

1.1 "Maximum Candor"

President Lyndon Baines Johnson, adhering to President Eisenhower's "domino-theory", believed that if South Vietnam fell to communism, other countries would soon follow. Pauline Maier argues that Johnson was determined not "to be the president who saw Southeast Asia go the way China went," believing an American withdrawal from South Vietnam would eventually damage his reputation and chances for a re-election in 1969.[29] If the U.S withdrew, Johnson also feared that American commitment to defend freedom against communist aggression in other places around the world might loose credibility.[30]

As American commitment to the war persisted, more and more journalists covered the war which was getting worse by the month. An increase in the number of journalists made it difficult for the Johnson administration to sell American military commitment in a county most Americans had no cultural or political affiliation with. Wyatt argues that President Johnson took massive advantage media's need for information. The Johnson administration believed that they would get across its own view of the war and the war's progress more easily if journalists were provided with the kind of information needed to satisfy their editors and the American people.[31] If journalists had enough information to report on, they would not commit themselves to investigative journalism. Similarly, Peter Braestrup, chief of the *Washington Post*'s Saigon news bureau, claims that in order to keep public sentiments about the war high, Johnson and his advisors in the Pentagon consistently tried to counter any news that contradicted the official line that the military was making progress in Vietnam.[32]

To prevent investigative journalism, the "*Maximum Candor"* public-affairs strategy was launched in the summer of 1964. In essence, *Maximum Candor* can be described as an instrument implemented to please journalists and not make them question Johnson's war strategy. For example, journalists returning from the battlefield were provided with access to the same "comfort facilities" as higher ranking military officers had.[33] That meant access to hot showers, televised baseball games, cold beers, and post exchanges.[34] "With some luck, the newsmen were able to shoot some good film or produce a story at an outpost, catch a ride back to Saigon the same evening, get the final story on its way to the US, and have a French dinner downtown."[35] The way journalists were treated by the U.S. military often flabbergasted the French and British supporting troops.[36] Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) also increased the number of briefings held for journalists. Information about the progress of

the war was made available every hour and journalists were also provided with much help when seeking to enter the battlefield.[37]

Hallin argues that Johnson's "news managing" plan can largely be considered a success, at least up to January 1968. Despite a deteriorating war, between August 1965 and January 1968, the number of favorable press editorial comments exceeded negative editorial comments eleven to three. He notes, however, that it is difficult to measure the objectivity of a news report. The measure is therefore scored very conservatively and he only included the most explicit instances of where the reporting is clearly favorable or unfavourable.[38] Despite of this conservative assessment, the numbers clearly indicate that a majority of the editorial comments were positive and favorable to American intervention. Hallin points to a *New York Times* article on the Gulf of Tonkin-incident, published on August 4, 1964, as a great example of how the news were being managed in the early years of the war.[39] By presenting pure facts, the article is indeed objective but it does not ask critical questions concerning the facts it presents. As Hallin explains, "When the president says, 'Black is white', you write, 'The president said black is white.'"[40]

Although not intentionally lying to journalists about the true picture of the war, Hallin writes that civilian officials in Washington contributed to keeping journalists misinformed throughout the mid-1960s. The few people within the administration who believed that the American people should be informed about the state of the war feared that their influence in the policy process would be jeopardized if they spoke out. In Congress, the principle of presidential prerogative in foreign policy was still strong and it prevented many legislators from criticizing President Johnson overall war-strategy.[41]

1.2 Increase of Media Scepticism

In March 1965, Johnson realized that American troops soon had to be implemented into the ground war. In order to draw public attention away from the issue of a deeper American involvement in the war, William M. Hammond argues that the State and the Defense Department de-emphasized the American role and diverted all the attention to South Vietnamese accomplishments.[42] Max Boot provides another example of how President Johnson drew attention away from the conflict. When the first U.S. Marines landed in Da Nang, South Vietnam's second-largest city, on March 8 1965, Johnson drew attention to his domestic policy rather than foreign policy by proposing a new crime control package in the U.S.[43]

By diverting the focus of interest, officials also aimed at turning journalists into counter-insurgency correspondents. Critics of the plan, among them U.S. Army General William C. Westmoreland, commander of the U.S. military operations in Vietnam between 1964-1968, and Colonel Benjamin Legare (U.S. Army), were convinced that the tactic of downplaying the American role was bound to fail because journalists would eventually see for themselves that American soldiers had become active rather than passive actors on the battlefield. Instead, General Westmoreland advocated a plan that involved a comprehensive background briefing for selected newsmen on American combat operations. Fearing that the background briefings would produce negative news reports, the Johnson administration vetoed the plan.[44] As the news about further American involvement in the ground war became known, massive complains from Congress and the media poured in, arguing that a "dangerous and reckless departure from accepted policy had occurred"[45] and that the de-emphasizing of the American role only indicated that a cover-up was in progress.[46]

As Hallin argues, despite major efforts made to manipulate journalists' war comprehension, it is possible to identify a change in news coverage reporting during the mid-1960s. As the war progressed, several journalists experienced that information presented at official military briefings often directly contradicted what they themselves had seen.[47] James Reston, working for *The New York Times*, for example, argues on May 17 1966, that President Johnson mixed up news and truths.[48]

Two offices were responsible for providing public support for the media in Vietnam, the Joint United States Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO) and the MACV office, a command subordinate to the commander-in chief in the Pacific, Office of Information (MACOI). The MACOI, headed by Brigadier Winant K. Sidle, was the official voice of MACV and it prepared the daily military briefings that were presented at the JUSPAO. Military briefings consisted of daily operational reports presented by field commanders brought together at the MACV operations center.[49] Braestrup argues that it became apparent that the Johnson administrations' goal of presenting distorted information about the war began to fail as more and more journalists started to believe that governmental information provided at the JUSPAO was based on "hasty, fragmentary, inevitably inaccurate field reports of action in a theatre of war where there was no actual front line, moving or stationary."[50] Further, Braestrup claims that these ill feelings developed because information provided at the military briefings were too broad-based and could not be linked to larger operational themes or efforts. The official nightly JUSPAO briefings were soon nicknamed "Five o'clock Follies" by journalists. Determined to end the mocking, the embassy moved the briefings to 16.45.[51]

Inaccurate information presented at the JUSPAO briefings helped to breed a lack of both governmental and military credibility among journalists. An example of growing journalistic scepticism regarding the war's operational strategy will be presented next.

1.2.1 Tear and Nausea Gas

According to Hammond, in late 1964 South Vietnamese commanders were planning to introduce tear- and nausea producing gasses to the war effort. Deployment of the gasses was considered a better option compared with the usage of heavy artillery and air strikes in situations where civilians could get killed. Even though the gasses were standard riot-control agents, American military public-affairs officers (PAOs) recognized early on that journalists would react in a negative fashion towards the use of gas. The State and Defense Department, however, refused to make any statement about the gasses. They believed that it would give the enemy, who knew that U.S. allies in Europe still remembered the usage of mustard-gas during World War Two, a propaganda advantage when claiming that the U.S. was involved with gassing innocent people[52]

After learning about an incident where a twelve-year old girl had suffered from a swollen face after being exposed to the gases, Peter Arnett from the television channel *CNN*, asked PAOs at the JUSPAO for an explanation for why the military accepted usage of gas that harmed civilians. The PAOs, following orders from Washington, declined to respond.[53] The refusal to make a statement eventually backfired. Declining to respond to questions regarding U.S. involvement in the deployment of gasses, gave the impression that it was the JUSPAO that was being uncooperative and not Washington who had actually given the orders. Hammond states that when an explanation was finally given, journalists around the world paid little attention to it and instead preferred to interpret it as a confirmation of Peter Arnett's story.[54] Hammond cites two news articles mentioning Arnett's discovery. On March 24 1965, the *Washington Post* wrote that "[t]he argument that the non-toxic gag is more merciful than anti-personnel weapons has some merit, but not much. Although the gas may not be poison, the word is, and all the propaganda resources in the world cannot explain away its employment as an act of Christian charity."[55] Similarly, on the same date *The New York Times* wrote that "[e]ven a temporarily disabling gas could kill the sick and the very young."[56] These negative news articles bluntly criticised the military.

When refusing to answer questions, the Johnson administration created problems for itself. First, all the commotion regarding the use of gas, despite that it was relatively harmless, revealed that the U.S. had not ratified the International Protocol on Gas Warfare, a protocol

very important to for example Great Britain. The Johnson administration had planned to escalate the war in April 1965 and was afraid of loosing any support to their advance.[57]

Second, *Wall Street Journal* reporter Philip Geyelin argues that the significance of the episode was not the deployment of the gas itself, but rather the uproar that followed. When countries and allies around the world protested, Americans were left with the impression that the U.S. was much more alone on the issue of Vietnam than what President Johnson had been willing to admit.[58] The episode clearly indicates that American journalists no longer bluntly believed everything they were told at official military briefings or automatically accepted information that came from the Johnson administration. This marked a significant shift from writing "the President says that black is white".

1.3 Government Reaction to Increased Media Scepticism

The State Department was alarmed by journalists' eagerness to cover American soldiers engaging in ground combat. After discussing various approaches on how to handle journalistic access to information with PAOs, MACV and representatives from all U.S. agencies at a conference in March 18-20 1965, a system of voluntary media cooperation was settled upon.[59] In broad terms, the new system meant that print journalists, no matter who they worked for, had to voluntarily agree to be placed under certain restrictions in order to be accredited and receive different kinds of benefits that accompanied this status.

The voluntary system consisted of fourteen categories of rules that needed to be followed. The rules were issued by the Pentagon and were designed to protect military intelligence that could assist the enemy. Journalists had to agree to:

> Never to reveal future plans, operations, or air strikes; information on rules of engagement; or the amounts of ordnance or fuel on hand to support combat units. During an operation, unit designations, troop movements, and tactical deployments were to remain secret. So were the methods, activities, and specific locations of intelligence units; the exact number and type of casualties suffered by friendly forces; the number of sorties and amount of ordnance delivered outside of South Vietnam; and information on aircraft taking off for, en route to, or returning from target areas. The press was also to avoid publishing details on the number of aircraft damaged by enemy antiaircraft defenses; tactical specifics such as altitudes, courses, speeds, or angles of attack; anything that would tend to confirm planned strikes which failed to occur for any reason, including bad weather; the types of enemy weapons that had shot down friendly aircraft; and anything having to do with efforts to find and rescue downed airmen while a search was in progress.[60]

If a journalist ignored the rules, he/she would lose his/her accreditation.[61] In a way one could say that the ground-rules symbolized a kind of trade-off between the press and Pentagon. Journalists promised not to reveal certain information and in return they received access to other kinds of information they needed in order to do their job. Vietnam thus became the first

U.S. war in which journalists were routinely accredited to accompany military forces, but not subjected to formal censorship.[62]

Politically and military there were many reasons for choosing not to officially censor news reports. First, the Vietnam War was a limited war. Hallin claims that a "limited war" classification meant that the U.S. was only guests-participants in the war because a declaration of war was never issued by the U.S. Imposing censorship in an undeclared war where America was formally the guest of South Vietnam was politically impractical. The South Vietnamese government was a fully functioning and sovereign government so the Johnson administration could not impose rules regarding censorship as they pleased.[63] If the South Vietnamese government decided to impose full censorship themselves it would not have worked because South Vietnam lacked any concept of a free press. As a result, the government would be able to apply strict censorship whenever an American wrote or said something they did not like.[64] Imposing censorship would also require an enormous logistical effort by the military. All mail, communications, and transportation facilities would have to be controlled by cooperative multilingual personnel.[65]

Censoring news reports would also cause major uproar amongst news bureaus and journalists. This became evident when journalists were given restricted access to American airbases at Da Nang and Bien Hoa. According to the new rules, each journalist needed a military escort when visiting the bases, but there were only two officers available and more than thirty print journalists in the area. An assembly of American public-affairs officers concluded that the closing of the airbases and restrictions on the press would only spark further uproars, and the new rules were abolished. [66]

Journalists agreed to follow the voluntary ground-rule system, but as the war continued to escalate it became obvious that in order to serve as a check on the government, the ground rules had to be violated. Morley Safer from *CBS News* illustrated this in a news report. Safer criticized a Marine operation that had gone wrong in the village of Cam Ne on August 3, 1965. Fred Friendly, the president of *CBS News*, defended Safer: "We don't want to violate purely *military* security with reports which could endanger the life of a single soldier, but by the same token, we must insist upon out right to report what is actually happening despite the political consequences…"[67] Despite journalistic violation of the ground rules, no censorship was implemented because it would mean that future critical news reports such as editorials and news analysis would have to be censored. To do so would violate the First Amendment and then the Congress, the public, and the overall media could start to unite in opposition towards Johnson and the war.[68]

1.3.1 Body Counts and Diverting Claims

The war produced more and more American casualties while the enemy did not show any sign of retaliating in the near future. Fearing for an erosion of public support, Arthur Sylvester, Assistant Secretary of Defense for public affairs, pointed to the journalistic tendency of interpreting the absence of a large body count as evidence that a mission had failed.[69] Fearing for a loss of public support, Secretary of Defense McNamara ordered in October 1965 that every American military unit were to produce a weekly situation report which stated that pre-set governmental objectives had been met.[70] Since detecting and fighting the enemy was difficult, seizing territory and measuring captured weapons and incidents of enemy defection was hard. In order to show some degree of progress and success, the U.S. military started to count killed North Vietnamese and Viet Cong soldiers. In essence, the logic behind the body-count procedure was that if more enemy soldiers than American soldiers were killed, the U.S. was much closer to victory.[71] Many military officers also believed that their promotion was determined by how many enemies their unit killed.[72]

In his book *My American Journey,* Colin Powell, retired four-star U.S. Army general and the 65th Secretary of State, writes that a typical conversation between a commander and an operator asking for the number of enemy killed went as followed: "How many did your platoon get?" "I don't know. We saw two for sure." "Well, if you saw two, there were probably eight. So let's say ten."[73] It was also reported in The *New York Times* that "United States Marines had managed to trap about 2,000 Vietcongs guerrilla with their backs to the sea and killed "hundreds" of them in the first major battle involving American troops in Vietnam."[74] Lieutenant Calley, later indicted for being responsible for a massacre at My Lai, remember his encounter with the body counts procedure,

> I like if I can encourage them and say, "Outstanding." Or even, "Chalk up a body count of twelve." It helps the artillery`s moral: but I couldn`t do it. I hadn't seen a VC all that day. I knew damn well, *Weber`s dead. A boy in the second platoon has no legs anymore. A boy in the third platoon*- I had to do it. I wrote in the after-action report "VC body count six.[75]

Inaccurate numbers of killed enemy was also produced when many units were involved in the same battle. When an enemy was killed, every unit present reported that hit which meant that the killed enemy was counted several times. These false numbers were reported further up the chain-of-command which again resulted in false announcements to journalists. Flawed internal data was presented as true facts and thus contributed to the false positive picture of the war that military officials presented at the nightly JUSPAO briefings.[76]

President Johnson himself sometimes referred to false body count numbers when he wanted to talk about the war's progress.[77] In late 1967 official numbers claimed that 220,000

enemy soldiers were killed. Later it was estimated that approximately 30 percent of the reported numbers were misleading claims.[78] Charles Morh of *The New York Times* reveals his disgust for the body counting procedure when asserting that "a steady stream of misinformation" was emanating from U.S military commanders.[79]

Most journalists longer viewed government-provided information a viable option when writing their reports and instead collected information from other sources. From regarding the government a provider of reliable information to accusing it of manipulating information reveals a paradigm-shift in media-government relation in the war. By no longer bluntly relying on official information while at the same time being eager to report the "true" picture of the war meant that the media business, in theory, were now able to serve as a check on the government in an unprecedented scale compared to earlier in the war.

When using alternative sources, American journalists came to be regarded as a means for spreading North Vietnamese communist propaganda by the military and the Johnson administration, exemplified here by news reports cited in both Hammond and Wyatt. North Vietnamese officials had invited the Assistant Managing director of *The New York Times*, Harrison E. Salisbury, to North Vietnam and showed him towns and villages they claimed had been hit by American bombs.[80] Salisbury published articles about his visit. The stories caused havoc in Congress and in the media. Walter Cronkite of CBS News claimed that Salisbury's articles had widened the credibility gap between the press and the U.S. military and the Johnson Administration and military public affairs officers accused Salisbury of placing too much faith in what the North Vietnamese had told him.[81]

In his articles, Salisbury had questioned whether the city of Nam Ding contained important military targets. According to Hammond, the city actually housed a petroleum storage facility, an important railroad yard, and a thermal power plant that was heavily guarded by the largest concentration of antiaircraft weaponry in North Vietnam.[82] The military claimed that Salisbury never had visited the region and had only used quotations from North Vietnamese officials.[83] Salisbury's objectivity were questioned when news desks learned about the military's claim of the reports being full of North Vietnamese propaganda.
The *Washington Post* started to question whether the articles were reliable or not. Hammond explains that in the days that followed, *New York Times* editors also rejected what the stories alleged. They called the stories "sweeping denunciations and false conclusions"[84] and argued that "the whole tone of this story [Salisbury's] gives the impression that the United States is deliberately undertaking saturation and population bombing, and it swallows the Communist line almost hook, line and sinker."[85] The Salisbury-articles, however, had already influenced

negative sentiments towards the war back home. One of the news articles said that " [t]he aims, aspirations and operations of the Northern Liberal Front are viewed by its leadership in terms sharply different from the picture held by many Americans."[86] Publishing articles that favored the North Vietnamese hurt the negative assessment that President Johnson and his administration wanted to portray of their enemy.

1.4 Media-Military Relations

Johnson's news manipulation did not only damage the government's credibility with the overall media, but it also sat precedence on how the media in general and the military came to understand one another with regards to credibility and trust. As seen earlier in the chapter, the U.S. military was frequently used as an instrument for building public support for the war. Military PAOs are first and foremost responsible for reporting military war progress and making assessments and recommendations. In Vietnam, military personnel also became involved with justifying the war politically, despite that efforts were made to divorce MACV from domestic policies. Both General Westmoreland and Barry Zorthian, who was in charge of media relations and internal communications from 1964 to 1968, made major efforts to downplay Johnson's war-strategies justifications in the command's official statements.[87] When anti-war sentiments continued to grow in the U.S., Johnson ordered General Westmoreland to give a speech at the National Press Club on November 21 1965.

In his speech, General Westmoreland talked about the war in very optimistic terms. He claimed that "success lies within our grasp"[88] and revealed his strategic plan and indicated that the U.S. could soon withdraw after turning more responsibility over to the South Vietnamese government.[89] General Westmoreland continued to appraise the war-effort when later being interviewed and elaborated it even further on a "*Meet the Press"* program.[90]

The war, however, was not going in the direction that General Westmoreland announced that it was. While the war and the war-effort was sugar-coated by the State and Defense Department, and President Johnson late in 1967, military leaders in North Vietnam believed that it was time to take action and decided to step up their operations in South Vietnam. Their ultimate goal was to bring the war to an end with a major offensive. In order to succeed, they sought to drive the Americans out of the South Vietnamese cities, infiltrate personnel and material into the cities, and eventually overthrow the South Vietnamese government.[91]

The North Vietnamese attacked on January 31, 1968. About 67,000 Viet Cong soldiers and North Vietnamese troops assaulted 36 South Vietnamese provincial capitals, five

of the six autonomous cities, and 64 of the 242 district capitals.[92] In historical terms, the attack has later been referred to as the *Tet Offensive*, named after the Vietnamese lunar New Year celebration. Tactically and operationally, the Tet Offensive was a victory for the South Vietnamese and American forces.[93] By the end of February, North Vietnam had suffered major losses in casualties. Between 45,000 and 84,000 soldiers were killed. 14,000 South Vietnamese and 4000 Americans lost their lives.[94]

Tet, however, became a major political, psychological, diplomatic, and strategic defeat for the ARVN and the U.S forces. Since the American people had been told as late as November 1967 that victory was in sight, the attack came as a massive shock.[95] For years the Vietnam War had been characterized as winnable and just. Suddenly the war had instead become brutal, inhumane, and costly.[96] A *New York Times* article, published February 2, 1968, reported that in the State Department, the Capitol Hill, and in the Pentagon people described the attack as "humiliating" and "embarrassing" to the Johnson administration and the South Vietnamese Government.[97]

1.4.1 Media Reaction to the Tet Offensive

Pictures of killed American soldiers and civilians and reports of atrocities and devastation did not resemble anything the American people had been exposed to before, at least not in such a massive scale. The result was that both journalists and the American people felt betrayed by the military and the Johnson administration. The reality of the war did not fit what the public had been told.

Many civilians, including journalists present in Vietnam, argue that journalists did not do an acceptable job when reporting during Tet. Peter C. Rollins, professor eritmus of English and American film, writes that coverage of Tet has been described as dishonest, unprofessional and irresponsible[98] while Hallin and Braestrup argue that many of the news reports that were published lacked accuracy.[99] The press's handling of an attack on the U.S. Embassy is a good example of inaccurate reporting. On January 31, journalists heard fire coming from the direction of the American embassy. When talking to military police at the scene, journalists were told that North Vietnamese soldiers had managed to enter the lower floors of the building. The U.S State Department, however, had running contact with the embassy and was informed by the staff that the embassy was not penetrated by the enemy.[100] In order to counter the rumours, President Johnson, once again, ordered General Westmoreland to hold a press conference everyday during the offensive, in order to "convey your confidence in our capability to blunt these enemy moves, and to reassure the public that

you have the situation under control."[101] At this point, the press no longer trusted information published by the government.[102] A *New York Times* article, cited in Hammond, reported as late as February 2 1968 that guerrillas had penetrated at least the first floor of the embassy.[103]

Pictures and reports that lacked context also contributed to faulty reporting. One of the best known pictures from the Vietnam War was captured during Tet was taken by Associated Press photographer Eddie Adams. He took a picture of Brigadier General Nguyen Ngoc Loan, the national Chief of Police, executing a Viet Cong officer in the streets of Saigon.[104] The Viet Cong officer was believed to have killed a major and his family.[105] The picture, captured as a photograph and on TV-film, was described as "the strongest stuff American viewers had ever seen."[106] Rollins accuse journalists writing about the incident of distorting the situation since the picture was not accompanied with any information of what had happened earlier or with the reason for the execution.[107]

It exist multiple opinions to why news reports were so inaccurate. Braestrup explains that before Tet, frustrated journalists could not actually *prove* that President Johnson's optimism was exaggerated, but when the North Vietnamese attacked, the primary reaction of many journalists was to indulge in retribution for prior manipulation.[108] This claim is not very plausible because most journalists working for serious, national-wide newspapers, and TV-networks usually have large amounts of integrity and take their profession seriously. Wyatt claims that overloaded phone systems made it difficult to dictate dispatches or verify information with sources outside Saigon[109], while Major Edward L. English (U.S. Army) emphasis two economic aspects of the news business and a military bureaucratic obstacle his thesis "*Towards a More Productive Military-Media Relationship"*. First, because not all news bureaus could spend an unlimited amount of resources, meant that many journalists could not spend many hours a day performing investigative journalism in the field before handing in a news report. Most journalists covered the attack from Saigon, Ke Sanh, and Hue where the most dramatic scenes occurred. Scenes from the large cities were not symptomatic with the U.S. military counter-offensive across South Vietnam. Second, the news-business is competitive and hectic. In order to keep up with other news agencies, journalists had to report as fast as they could which, again, limited them from producing investigative and objective journalism.[110] General Westmoreland was also left with the impression that journalists were hunters, only out looking for the next big scoop when arguing that:

> Chet Huntley on the NBC Evening News had the VC inside the Chancery, the defenders in the compound outside. There was no report on Allied casualties in Saigon, said Huntley, "but they`re believed to be high". Was that kind of gratuitous speculation justified? Was the long, costly American effort in Vietnam to be sacrificed to the idols of sensation and competition?[111]

To learn about military movements and combats out on the battlefield, journalists had to make contact with Brigadier General Winant Sidle (U.S. Army) or his staff at the MACOI, who received information from MACV. When Tet occurred, MACOI were unable to keep up with all events and passing out information to journalists. English argues that this lack of military information forced journalists to speculate about the attack and the progress of the counteroffensive.[112] Robin Anderson, Adrian R. Lewis, and Braestrup, however, argue that the passive reaction of the Johnson administration permitted both journalists and his political opponents to argue that the attack was a major U.S. defeat. For two months, no official government explanation was voiced.[113]

1.4.2 Credibility Gap

After Tet, journalistic scepticism towards the Johnson administration and the military had blossomed into a "credibility gap" and media-military relations had become very strained. When the true picture of the war was exposed, journalists that still attended official briefings no longer believed PAOs when they presented statements of war progress. After being exposed as "dishonest," the press challenged and questioned every military move and announcement.[114] Christopher Paul and James J. Kim argue that "Tet clearly exposed the falsehood of administration claims and pushed many reporters from scepticism to outright mistrust of the military"[115] Major Michael P. Erdle (U.S Army) concurs when writing that journalists believed that they had been intentionally misled by the military.[116]

Hammond argues that the credibility-gap heavily influenced how journalists wrote their reports after 1968. Instead of focusing solely on reporting facts about combat, they wrote highly critical and analytical reports. Journalists also directly criticised the military, emphasizing problems connected to race relations and increasing drug abuse amongst soldiers.[117] The military was criticized and presented as dishonest and manipulative. Because official censorship was never present in Vietnam, the Johnson administration could not impose regulations on journalists' negative reporting of the war and the military. By being involved with "selling the war" to journalists and the American people, the military came to symbolize a failed war-strategy. Braestrup argues that there had been an "unprecedented use of the military to achieve domestic political objectives" and media criticism was directed toward the military instead of the Johnson administration.[118]

1.4.3 Military Reaction to Media Coverage of the Tet Offensive

The question of whether or not journalists' inaccurate reporting during Tet led to increasing anti-war sentiments in the U.S has been extensively debated. Although recognizing that many news reports veered widely from reality[119], Braestrup argues that there exist no evidence of a direct relationship between the dominant media themes in 1968 and the upsurge of anti-war sentiments in the U.S.[120] He believes that it was President Johnson's inability to choose the right policies and strategies that led to the defeat.[121]

The military does not agree with Braestrup. General Westmoreland believes that "[t]he war still could have been brought to a favorable end following the [communist] defeat ... But this was not to be. Press and television had created an aura, not of victory, but defeat". Just as journalists had developed distrust towards the military, the military also underwent a change in attitude toward the media in general. After Tet, many inside the military viewed both newspapers and television-stations as subversive and unpatriotic.[122] They believed that the media had singlehandedly turned the American people against the war and American soldiers by publishing false and inaccurate information. In other words, a large majority of the military believed that it was journalists who gave people back home a reason to doubt both the incentive to win the war as well as the war's moral and ethical justifications.

According to Braestrup, this negative attitude penetrated the military from top-management and down to captains and lieutenants. Hundred top officials who served in command positions in Vietnam were interviewed in a survey. Thirty-eight believed that newspapers coverage of the war was "on the whole tended to be irresponsible and disruptive of United States effort in Vietnam", fifty-one believed the coverage was "uneven. Some good, but many irresponsible", eight believed that newspapers played an important role in keeping the United States informed. Three did not answer or provided other answers.[123] General Westmoreland himself also felt that unfavourable and unfair press coverage influenced Nixon's decision to withdraw from the war. Rid cites a *Military Review* article where General Westmoreland argues that the mood of the Congress was, "a reflection of public attitudes, in turn influenced profoundly by the media- particularly by daily television reports- grew further away from the policy of the executive branch."[124]

Hallin claims that it was easier for policymakers or military commanders to blame journalists rather than to admit that they had allowed themselves to be victims of the Johnson's administrations propaganda scheme.[125] Douglas Porch, professor of national security affairs, however, argues that the absence of victory was the reason for why the

military projected hostility towards journalists. When victory in a war has been achieved, Porch claims that it will "erase the memories of a troubled relationship."[126]

Clark Dougan and Andrew Weiss argue that Tet only reinforced an already negative growing perception of the war and the American involvement.[127] Wyatt concurs and argues that Tet was not synonymous with a "sudden shift in opinion among correspondents, but more a confirmation of characteristic and trends that had been around for a long time."[128] Opinion polls presented in Lewis' book *The American Culture of War* support these assessments. News coverage, especially during and after Tet, was not the *only* reason why America changed its perception of the war. In 1965, opinion polls show that sixty-one percent of Americans supported the policies of President Johnson in Vietnam. In late 1967, fourty-seven percent of the American people were against the war and forty-four percent for.[129] Johnson had already started to lose support before Tet and before the military lost its most valuable general asset: credibility.

The negative attitude towards journalists that developed inside the U.S military was never put forward in a single official military document, but Thomas Rid argues that military animosity towards the media in general became manifested in a *routine knowledge asset.* He explains that this type of knowledge asset is a direct result from the military's experience with the media in Vietnam and that military animosity towards journalists had revealed itself in the military's organizational culture and tradition.[130] This "blame the media-syndrome" became a defining feature of the U.S. military public affairs policy for the next quarter century and a conventional wisdom amongst commanders and soldiers who operated out on the field.

Chapter 2

Restrictive Public Affairs: the Grenada Invasion and the Persian Gulf War

2.0 The Grenada Invasion

On October 25 1983, the U.S. invaded the Caribbean island of Grenada. The main goals of the invasion, also known as "Operation Urgent Fury" (OUF), were three-folded: remove the revolutionary Marxist regime "The People's Revolutionary Army" (PRA) which had taken control of the island; rescue the democratic elected prime minister; and rescue approximately one hundred American medical students who were living on Grenada.[1]

The animosity of the military towards the media revealed itself before and during the invasion**.** In her monograph *The Troubled Path to the Pentagons Rules on Media Access to the Battlefield: Grenada to Today* Pascale Combelles-Siegel claims that the relationship between the military and the press during UOF "exploded like a bomb."[2] OUF was the first military operation in American history to which the media had been denied full access. It took two and a half days before the media were allowed to access the island.[3] Five military justifications for advocating a news blackout can be identified. These have been divided into two categories: an operational strategy-category and a culture-category.

2.0.1 Military Operational Strategy

According to Marcia Block and Geoff Mungham article "The military, the media and the invasion of Grenada", the military claimed that the very nature of the mission had made it impossible to allow journalists to access the island.[4] In his book *Battle Lines: Report of the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on the Military and the Media*, Peter Braestrup, a former war correspondent for *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, concurs with Block and Mungham. He cites Admiral Wesley McDonald's report on the invasion to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. McDonald argued the fact that

> [the military had to] maintain the greatest element of surprise in executing the mission to ensure minimum danger to US hostages … and to the servicemen involved in the initial assault dictated that the press be restricted until the initial objectives had been secured.[5]

Keeping as many people as possible in the dark before the invasion was launched was considered a necessary means. If any information about the planned invasion were leaked to the media, the mission would be jeopardized. If the media reported on the forthcoming

invasion, the PRA would be informed and would thus be able to rearm and prepare.[6] The invasion was so secret that the commander-to-be, Vice Admiral Joseph Metcalf III, was notified only two days before it was scheduled to commence. Metcalf's Army Deputy and Advisor General Norman H. Schwarzkopf was informed even later, only nineteen hours before the launch.[7] Michael Burch, a Pentagon's spokesperson, was informed the night before while Larry Speaks, the official spokesperson at the White House, and David Gergen, the President Reagan's Communications Director, were not informed at all.[8]

It is possible to identify three additional underlying reasons for why American military participation in the invasion was kept a secret. First of all, Thomas Rid argues that if official spokespersons had been informed of the forthcoming invasion, they would have had to lie if asked any questions about it. If official spokespersons were caught lying, the government could be accused once again of attempting to cover up an American military intervention.[9] The second underlying reason was based on the so-called "Vietnam syndrome", a resistance to using American military force abroad. President Reagan believed that any American intervention on Grenada would cause uproar among members of the Congress and the American people. Many were afraid of entering into another expensive war in which American lives could be lost.[10] Third, Block and Mungham argue that President Reagan and his administration did not advocate free governmental information and therefore did not push for full media access. President Reagan's animosity to informing the media of the invasion can not be considered to be a one-off occurrence in relations between the government and media during his presidency. Jeffery A. Smith argues that President Reagan relied on "President Lincoln's unilateral actions as a precedent for virtually unrestricted presidential power over matters of war and foreign policy."[11]

Further, Smith argues that Reagan often defended his prerogative actions by quoting an essay written by the conservative scholar Walter Berns. Berns believe that because the U.S. Constitution vests legislative, executive and judicial power to Congress, the president and the Supreme Court, the American president is an "independent" representative of the American people and could therefore not be considered as limited by the law. The president receives his powers from the people and can subsequently use his powers prerogatively because the U.S. Constitution states that law is not supreme.[12] In his autobiography *An American Life*, President Reagan explains that when he and his advisors decided to act up the *Organization of Eastern Caribbean States* request for U.S. military support in Grenada "[w]e didn't ask anybody, we just did it."[13]

The second reason for why the U.S. military did not want the media present on Grenada was because the military could not guarantee that journalists would be safe from harm during the combat phase.[14] On October 27, a press conference was held by Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger and General John W. Vessey, Jr., Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Braestrup argues that the main purpose of the press conference was to explain why journalists had not been allowed to enter Grenada. He quotes Weinberger who defended the restrictions,

> [t]he reasons is of course the Commanders decision, and I certainly don't ever, wouldn't ever dream of overriding Commanders' decisions in charge of an operations like this, their conclusion was that they were not able to guarantee any kind of safety of anyone including of course anybody participating and that you have to maintain some kind of awareness of the problems going into areas where we don't know what kind of conditions totally will be encountered. Where the airport was obviously heavily overloaded with all kinds of activity and we just didn't have the conditions under which we thought we would be able to detach enough people to protect all of the newsmen, cameramen, gripmen, all of that. As soon as the Commanders notify us that it is appropriate, and I hope it can be as soon as tomorrow, newsmen can go in.[15]

Third, Block and Mungham argue that there was not enough time or knowledge to implement a media pool into the military's public-affairs strategy.[16] The U.S. was formally asked to participate in the invasion at 2.45 a.m. on October 22; on the evening of October 23 President Reagan "took a 'tentative decision' to invade" the island.[17] Only on October 26 did, Captain Owen Resweber, Chief Public Affairs Officer, received orders to develop a public-affairs plan and establish an information office on Barbados, the neighboring island.[18]

2.0.2 Military Culture: Routine Knowledge Asset

The fourth military justification for choosing to deny the media access was based on the notion that the military did not believe that they were denying journalists a *right* because there were no written military rules, doctrines, or policies dealing with journalists' access to the battlefield. Block and Mungham argue that many within the military believed that it was up to them to decide whether or not the media were to be granted access.[19]

The fifth justification is connected to Rid's assessment of a military intergrained distrust of the media. Block and Mungham, and Braestrup claim that the personal perception of military staff of media coverage influenced the Pentagon's decision to implement a restrictive public affairs-strategy. American commanders' perception of the media bore most weight. In 1983, a majority of the highest ranking commanders still blamed the media the Vietnam War being lost.[20] According to Braestrup, General John W. Vessey Jr. (U.S. Army) first expressed a desire for a restrictive public-affairs strategy. Neither Admiral Wesley L. McDonald (U.S. Navy), who drafted the operations plan, nor the Joint Chiefs argued against

Vessey's whish.[21] Vice Admiral Metcalf recalls how quickly he agreed with his fellow commanders,

> From the time I was notified that I was to lead the Grenada operation until the first troops landed only 39 hours elapsed. In this brief period before combat, the only consideration that I gave to the media occurred about six hours into the 39. A lieutenant commander, an Atlantic Command public affairs officer, came to me and said: 'There will be no press. Do you have any problems with this?' I said I did not.[22]

Not only commanders and high-ranking officers regarded the media with animosity. Block and Mungham cite an editorial in the Air Force publication *Current News.* The editorial argued that "[the media] seeks constantly to ridicule and undermine the traditional ideas of our individual citizens' devotion to duty, honor and country" and that the media's leadership is "inexorably intolerant and therefore fascistic."[23]

In their book *America's Team*, Frank Aukofer, a journalist, and William Lawrence, a retired U.S Navy Vice Admiral, concur with Rid's assessment of a learned military distaste for the media. Aukofer and Lawrence elaborate on this theory, arguing that two other factors exist that influenced the restrictive public-affairs strategy. First, the military personnel's dislike of the media was allowed to flourish because the military has a tradition of letting only Public Affairs Officers (PAO) deal with media arrangements.[24] Subsequently, when the invasion was launched there was an entire generation of military commanders "who did not think 'public affairs'."[25] Lieutenant Colonel Michael J. Oehl, (U.S Marine Corps) and Greg McLaughlin, author of the book *The War Correspondent,* also contend that American commanders had a tradition of focusing solely on the operational aspect of a military mission. Public-affairs strategy was not considered an important part of a mission.[26] Aukofer and Lawrence also argue that the need for complete operational secrecy helped enhance the principle of excluding PAOs at the planning stage.[27] If commanders had no tradition of including PAOs in the planning phase of a publicly known operation they would certainly not inform them when planning a secret operation.

2.1 Press Reaction to the News Blackout in Grenada

After the invasion became known, two significant press complaints concerning the military's restrictive public-affairs strategy were voiced. The first was based on tradition. The press asserted they had always been present during large military operations and should therefore be allowed access to Grenada.[28] Howard Simons, the Managing Editor of *The Washington Post* argued thus:

> The phrase in not in the First Amendment but it's in our tradition, it's in our bones, it's in our marrow. And I think…that all you do when you create a blackout such as this, which I say is unprecedented in peacetime, is to create the idea there's a cover-up, there's something to hide. I think the press is perfectly willing to take the risk of war as we've done since the Civil War and World War I, II, Korea, Vietnam. We're not asking for anything special in the way of protection; we can take care of ourselves. What we want to do is to see for ourselves and not rely on Radio Havana and some vague reports elsewhere[29]

The second complaint culminated in the notion that when journalists were deprived of access to the battlefield, the American people were also deprived of their right to know what kinds of actions their government was engaging in and that the First Amendment had been violated.[30] Braestrup and Combelles-Siegel write that journalists were crying out for an explanation for "what they saw as the administration's refusal to acknowledge the importance of the First Amendment"[31] and that there was a great need for press access during "wartime" situations.[32] Simons has argued similarly:

> It seems to me that the founding fathers invented the First Amendment to protect us against secret government. It also seems to me that every time there's been deception in this country we've paid a terrible price for it. Also, I don't know in my 30 years as a journalist of a single military operation anywhere in the world that was jeopardized by a news report. I think what distinguishes this country from most other countries is the First Amendment, the people's right to know. And I'm outraged that there's almost a total news blackout, even to the fact that the Federal Communications Commission today threatened to remove the licenses of ham radio operators who carry news reports.[33]

The Washington-based *Reporters' Committee for Freedom of the Press* (RCFP) contemplated a lawsuit in response to the Pentagon's restrictive public-affairs strategy.[34] The RCFP consisted of ten press organizations, including the *American Newspaper Publishers Association, National Association of Broadcasters,* the *Associated Press* and *United Press International.*[35] Braestrup claims that the RCFP decided not to proceed with the lawsuit even though the U.S. Supreme Court had in earlier cases ruled in favor of the press when the issue of the First Amendment was involved.[36] He cites the case of *Richmond Newspapers Inc v. Virginia*[37],

> The Court held that the First Amendment encompassed not only the right to speak but also the freedom to listen and to receive information and ideas. The Court also noted that the First Amendment guaranteed the right of assembly in public places such as courthouses. The Court emphasized that "certain unarticulated rights" were implicit in enumerated guarantees and were often "indispensable to the enjoyment of rights explicitly defined [38]

Richmond Newspapers Inc v. Virginia did not, however, set a precedent for free press access. In the court's judgement, it was also stated that "[t]he right of access to places traditionally open to the public, as criminal trials have long been, may be seen as assured by the amalgam of the First Amendment guarantees of speech and press."[39] This meant literally that if past battlefields traditionally been open to the U.S. public, the media could not be denied access. But in Vietnam, for example, there were zones which journalists were not allowed to enter.[40]

Braestrup also argues that the Supreme Court has had a tradition of barring journalists from places to which the public has not generally had right of access. *Pell v. Procunier* (1974) demonstrates this tendency[41],

> There are few restrictions on actions which could not be clothed by ingenious argument in the garb of decreased data flow. For example, the prohibition of unauthorized entry into the White House diminishes the citizens opportunities to gather information he might find relevant to his opinion of the way the country is being run, but that does not make entry into the White House a First Amendment right. The right to speak and publish does not carry with it the unrestrained right to gather information[42]

According to Block and Mungham, the press' First Amendment-argument lost credibility when a large percentage of the American people justified the news blackout because the invasion had been a success and they saw no need to respond to the press' criticisms.[43] Combelles-Siegel presents several opinion polls conducted by the Roper Organization during and after the invasion. Although eighty-three percent of the participants in the poll believed that in a democracy "one of the most important liberites is to be informed of events, especially when soldiers' lives are at stake", in November and December 1983 fifty-two percent of the American people had no difficulty accepting restricted media access in Grenada, while sixty-two percent agreed with the justifications given for denying access and forty-seven percent saw no problem in excluding the media while OUF was still active.[44] According to Terry Nardin and Kathleen D. Pritchard fifty percent of Americans believed that the invasion had been undertaken to protect American lives, but seventy percent approved of the intervention.[45] The U.S. Senate had by three votes to one decided that the restrictions had to be removed as long as it did not place the military in any immediate danger, but the American public's approval of a restrictive public-affairs strategy caused the issue to die in the Senate.[46]

2.2 Media Access in Grenada: Pools

The decision to keep Grenada sealed off from journalists only increased the news value. Hundreds of journalists, hoping to cover the invasion, travelled to Barbados. When they were denied access to Grenada, journalists sought to enter the island on their own. Defying the military's demand for a media-free zone led to confrontation, exemplified here by an incident later known as the "Ed Cody Affair". With four other journalists, Edward Cody from *The Washington Post* hired a fishing boat on Barbados and managed to reach St. George, Grenada's capital. On reaching shore they were stopped by the PRA. Cody and the three other journalists voluntarily left the island, hoping that they could instead use the American military vessel *Guam* as a base for writing their news articles.[47] In his autobiography, General Schwarzkopf recalls the incident while revealing his distaste for journalists,

> [w]hen I saw two civilians sprint across the flight deck and leap into a helicopter as we prepared to launch the raids on Grand Anse, I ran down to the deck and told them 'Get off. You're interfering with a military operation.' Metcalf ordered the captain of the *Guam* to see that they stayed off the flight deck. The reporters spent the rest of the afternoon sitting in the officers wardroom drinking coffee and eating sweet rolls. The incident showed up in *The Washington Post* as a story about journalists being 'held incommunicado' on the *Guam*[48]

To prevent similar episodes, Vice Admiral Metcalf banned all transportation to Grenada and quarantined the whole island: "I established an exclusion zone around Grenada, enforced by destroyers and aircrafts."[49] The day after the zone had been established a couple journalists entered the zone in a chartered boat. Vice Admiral Metcalf ordered a fighter plane to fire warning shots. When the boat did not turn around, Metcalf ordered the pilot to fire a second warning shot and if the boat still did not change its course the pilot was authorized to sink it. The boat turned around after the second warning shot.[50]

The military did not allow any kind of media access to the island before the invasion's goals had been reached. On October 26, these goals were indeed reached and a Joint Information Bureau (JIB) was established at Grantley Adams Airport on Barbados.[51] Braestrup explains that even though the military did eventually ease media restrictions, this not imply that they were willing to cooperate with the media. The way in which the public-affairs system was designed serves as an example. Even though the military had established a JIB, it had no direct link to Vice Admiral Metcalf. To contact him "JIB officers had to do it through the American embassy, who rang CINCLANT (Commander In Chief, Atlantic) in Virginia, who in turn contacted Metcalf and back again."[52] But when the media complained about access there was no difficulty getting Vice Admiral Metcalf to talk: "[t]he buck stops with me … you've got to argue with me, not the Department of Defense, not anybody else but me." He also accepted full responsibility for keeping the media out despite many in Washington advocating full media access.[53]

Because PAOs had not been incorporated into the wider operational plan, the JIB was not able to give every journalist the opportunity to enter a media pool daily. In addition, transportation vehicles and other types of support equipment were lacking.[54] On October 27, two and a half days after the invasion had been launched, the first press pool consisting of fifteen journalists was allowed to go on a guided tour of Grenada. At 6 am on October 28, the JIB registered approximately fifty journalists wanting to be given a slot in that day's pool. By 7.30 am 200 journalists were waiting in line. Only twenty-four journalists were chosen.[55] This pool was escorted to the same location as the first pool had visited on October 27. The pool on October 29 consisted of fifty journalists[56] while 182 were allowed access on October 30.[57] No answers were given as to why a journalist from newspaper A had been chosen instead of

journalists from, say, magazine B or C.[58] This greatly frustrated journalists. John Chancellor from the *NBC* compared Grenada with Vietnam in saying: "well, there is one thing you can say about the invasion of Grenada; it isn't a living room war."[59]

The journalists in the pools were also kept under tight supervision. Only when escorted were they allowed to visit pre-selected locations. The pools also had little access to newsworthy information. For example, journalists could not interview soldiers because by the time the pools had eventually been granted access, most of the soldiers had already left and those who were still on the island were engaged in combat on the other side of the island to which the pools had no access.[60] The third pool was allowed to see enemy prisoners but talking to them was strictly forbidden.[61]

When returning from the pools, the journalists were, according to set military ground rules, obliged to brief other journalists about what they had seen and been told. McLaughlin writes that this reliance on other journalists for information challenged the competitive aspect of journalism as journalists had to rely on people who in fact were their rivals in the United States. Finally, on October 30 all media restrictions were removed.[62] At this point most journalists chose to leave the island because there were no newsworthy stories to report on as the fighting had ceased.[63]

2.3 Critique of Media Coverage in Grenada

Despite being denied access to Grenada, the media were criticized for the way in which they chose to cover the invasion. James Shepley from *The Washington Post* argues that the military's intransigence was usually the main issue of the Grenada invasion, not the actual invasion itself. The significance of events was usually lost due to the conflict between the media and the military.[64] Braestrup describes the media as lazy and lacking imagination, arguing that journalists should have unveiled the various contradictions which existed between different official sources. Instead of expending their energy being upset because they had been excluded, they should have focused on trying to cover the whole story.[65] For example, in the aftermath of the invasion it became clear that official statements had not reported embarrassing military mishaps. An incident involving an American bomb killing eleven patients at a psychiatric hospital in Port Salines was verified by the military after the invasion was over.[66] Block and Mungham point to several incidents involving journalists publishing governmental information that proved to be false. For example, the quality and numbers of arms caches on the island and the level of danger posed to the American student were greatly inflated. Contrary to what U.S. officials claimed, Major Leon Cornwall, one of

Grenada's military leaders, stated on October 23 that all U.S. citizens who wished to leave the island for whatever reason could do so the following day.[67]

In his book, *On Bended Knee: The Press and the Reagan Presidency,* Martin Hertsgaard criticizes the American press which had visited Grenada for relying on and accepting official military information. He argues that the U.S. press often demonstrated the tendency to accept the basic truth of what its government told it. Hertsgaard firmly believes that if there was any kind of censorship present during the Grenada invasion, it was not government censorship *of* the press but self-censorship *by* the press.[68] In the aftermath of the invasion, the U.S. press acknowledged that their reporting had not been as good as it should have been. Block and Mungham claim that *The New York Times* later noted that "some misinformation was the result of combat confusion and some due to selective and incomplete reporting."[69]

Block and Mungham defend journalists arguing that the media alone cannot be blamed for producing inaccurate news reports. When good access to official information is denied, they argue, the media will resort to other sources. When the media are prevented from gathering correct information, one cannot expect them to produce correct and objective news reports.[70]

2.4 The Sidle Commission

Even though the invasion was deemed a military success, military personnel felt that they had been exposed to too much negative and unfavorable reporting. Vice Admiral Metcalf began to change his view on the media. According to Combelles-Siegel, Metcalf believed that the decision to keep journalists out had deprived the American public of a great story about its military.[71] Together with Admiral Watkins, Chief of Naval Operations, he also later revealed that he had been impressed by the press's responsible behaviour in its decisions not to print stories that could have damaged the American people's attitude towards the invasion.[72]

On November 4, 1983, the Joint Chiefs of Staff took a closer look at how the media had been treated during the invasion, and decided to investigate the role of the media in U.S. military operations.[73] The Sidle Military-Media Relations Panel, headed by U.S. Army Major General Winant Sidle, was given the task of identifying possible ways of how military implementing the media into military operations safely and securely.[74] The panel consisted of seven military officers and seven former reporters from news organizations,[75] nineteen representatives from major newspapers, magazines, wire services and television networks,

and three representatives from the military public affairs and information officers were also interviewed to gain a holistic view of the issue.[76]

The Sidle Panel report was handed to the Pentagon on August 23 1984. In sum, the Sidle report agreed with the media; the military needed to change its attitudes and policies regarding media access during military operations. To provide the American people with information about U.S. military operations, the Sidle Panel recommended that information had to be provided by both the news media and the military. To achieve this, eight recommendations were presented. First, when a military operation was being planed, operational planning and public affairs should be given equal attention. Second, if there were a need for a media pool during a military operation, it should be as large and representative as possible. Third, whether to use a pre-established accreditation list should be studied in concurrence with each military operation. Fourth, if the media were to access a military operation, they would have to comply voluntarily with the security guidelines and rules that were issued by the military, but such rules should be kept to a minimum. Fifth, if needed, the media were to receive assistance from qualified military personnel. Sixth, the military should pay attention to the needs of the media, but such needs could not interfere with combat and combat-support operations. Seventh, the military should provide transportation for the media. The eight recommendation dealt with how the relationship between the media and military could be improved and four possible solutions were presented: the military and press should meet regularly, more media courses should be taught at military academies, news organizations would gain an improved understanding of the military if military officers visited them, and the Secretary of Defense should meet the broadcasting media to discuss challenges associated with electronic media.[77]

Weinberg's official response to the report was to produce a press release which he attached to the report. Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) Michael Burch was assigned with implementing the recommendations for "maximum news coverage of military operations balanced with the need for military security."[78] The final product was presented to the public on October 3 1984 and a press pool, consisting of eleven people, was formed. Uproar ensued when it was discovered that no representative from any daily newspaper had been included in the pool. A revised pool plan was presented the next day; it included one reporter from a daily newspaper.[79]

Block and Mungham argue that the Sidle recommendations would *not* in fact improve the negative relationship between the media and the military. First, since media representatives had contributed only as consultants, they had not been able to influence the

proposed recommendations. Ultimately, it would be entirely up to military personnel to implement the new policy. This would cause problems since many U.S. Army commanders despised the media.[80] Second, the Pentagon had placed too much emphasis on the needs of the military compared to the needs of the media. This is, however, understandable because it is in the nature of the military to prioritize its own security. In recommending that the media had to abide by all military rules and guidelines, the Sidle Panel literally meant that, in the future, the military could censor information, restrict access to correspondents, and control transportation offered to the press and communications.[81] Block and Mungham's criticisms were proved legitimate during the Persian Gulf War.

2.5 Military Public-Affairs Strategy in the Persian Gulf War

The Persian Gulf War (1990-1991), also known as "Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm" was a UN-authorized military operation led by the U.S and compromising a coalition force consisting of thirty-four nations against Saddam Hussein's regime. President George H. W. Bush went to war seeking to reach four objectives: force Hussein to withdraw from Kuwait which had been occupied since August 1990, restore the Kuwaiti government, secure the Gulf, and provide for the safety of Americans. H.W. Brands argues that President Bush had a fifth objective as well, making a new world order, and he sought to use the Persian Gulf War as a means to build support for his vision,"By linking the crisis in the Gulf to his vision of a new world order, Bush hoped to heighten its significance and thereby mobilize political support behind his anti-Saddam policy."[82] Bush's new world order-vision sought to eradicate terrorism and secure world peace and justice. He eloquently claimed on September 11 1990 before a joint session of Congress that he whished for "[a]n era in which the nations of the world, East and West, North and South, can prosper and live in harmony."[83] Brands further explain that many Democrats in Congress as well as civilian Americans were not convinced that the road to a new and better world went through the Persian Gulf.[84] To prove them wrong it became increasingly more important to win the war. Bush wrote in his diary that as long as the American people supported the war in Kuwait, his chances of creating a new world order increased, "But once there starts to be erosion, they're going to do what Lyndon Johnson said: they painted their asses white and ran with the antelopes."[85]

2.5.1 Media Pools

The Sidle Panel had proposed five recommendations that would enhance media coverage on the battlefield. Only one of the five recommendations was implemented into the war's public

affairs strategy, the establishment of media pools. In his book, *War and the Media,* Philip M. Taylor explains that there were three different strands to the military's public affairs-system in the Persian Gulf War: the JIB at the Dhahran International Hotel at the King Abdul Aziz air force base; the daily military press briefings in Riyadh; and the National Media Pool program (NMP) which was established after recommendations from the Sidle Panel.[86] This chapter will focus on the NMP, especially the press pool.

Before the war started, every large news organization in Washington was sent "*Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm Ground Rules and Guidelines for News Media*"[87] (See Appendix A). To be able to be enrolled into the pools and visit U.S. military combat units out on the battlefield, journalists had to agree to be placed under heavy restrictions and adhere to military rules. No sensitive military information could be published, access to combat units would consist of preselected pools of journalists, and every report written within a pool had to be subjected to a security review by an accompanying PAO before it was sent to the U.S.[88]

Compared to earlier U.S. wars, the number of journalists covering the Persian Gulf War was exceptionally high. Between 1000-1600 journalists, both American and international, registered with the JIB.[89] The total number of journalists covering the war, however, is hard to determine because many registered several times with different JIBs to gain more access.[90] 126 journalists were assigned to the pools during the five-week air war and approximately 250 journalists were pooled during the three days of ground combat. [91] In total, there were twenty-five pools out in the battlefield at any given time.[92]

There were four different kinds of pools, one for each type of media, and they consisted of seven to eighteen members.[93] The first pool was reserved for photographers, the second for television journalists. The third and smallest pool was a radio pool, while the largest pool was a print pool. The print pool was established by members of the ten largest U.S. news organizations, journalists from three wire services (*Associated Press, Reuters,* and *United Press International*), four news magazines (*Time, Newsweek* and *U.S. News,* and *World Report*) and four major newspapers (the *New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, and Los Angeles Times).*[94] Large pools would join field Army and Marine units for periods of up to two weeks, while the "rapid reaction" pools would travel around areas to cover the Air Force, Navy, and breaking news.[95]

2.6 Press Problems with the Pools: Size

The Sidle Panel recommended that the media pools be as large and representative as possible. The sizes of the press pools in the Persian Gulf War were not large enough when considering the number of journalists seeking to cover the war. Fialka argues that there were thirty-nine print journalists who daily went out in the field and at least twice that number actually wanted to go out.[96] Michael Gordon, a *New York Times* journalist, characterizes the NMP as dysfunctional.[97]

The scarcity of slots was problematic for both large and small newspapers. The latter had spent much money to send journalists to Dhahran, but most of them were left waiting for their turn in the pools. Large newspapers, including *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, were frustrated because they had sent whole platoons of reporters but often only one journalist from each newspaper was allowed access to a pool.[98] In Fialka's book frustration cause by a poor combat-pool slot is exemplified by the bureau chief of *The New York Times* at the time, R.W. Apple. Apple ended up threatening Colonel Mulvey, Director of the JIB at the time, to arrange a better pool slot for his journalists.[99] He was particularly infuriated by the fact that a reporter from *Mirabella*, a woman's magazine, had been given a slot in the pool and no journalists from national newspapers had been given one that day.[100] *Mirabella*'s journalist apparently spent used most of her time in the pool writing about the sex lives of female soldiers and the drugs used by medical units.[101]

Woodward claims that the problem of limited access to specific units in the field was compounded by the fact that journalists themselves often became responsible for selecting pool journalists.[102] According to military ground rules, journalists was suppose to rotate[103], but the four different media pools developed different mechanisms for selecting pool members. Fialka recognizes a changing mechanism within the press pool which transformed from being a pure democracy to a plutocracy to a dictatorship, depending on who was running it.[104] The system of rotation was made obsolete by the "Sacred Sixteen" (consisting of reporters from *The New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal* and other major U.S. newspapers and large television stations) who kept the allocated press slots to themselves.[105] Molly Moore from the *Washington Post* explains in her book *A Woman at War* that small newspapers operated on small budgets and could thus not afford to send an army of journalists to cover the first phase of the build-up while not knowing whether a war would erupt or not. As a result, many small newspapers arrived just in time for the war and consequently felt powerless to push out big newspapers that had arrived early in the crisis.

The scarcity of pool slots caused fierce competition between newspapers, and journalists were constantly watching their backs for ambushes by disgruntled colleagues who were trying to steal their slots.[106]

In *The Army and the Media* Major Barry E. Venable (U.S. Army) argues that the exclusion of the press from anything but the pools or the briefing area at the JIB led to a form of "unofficial" censorship. English continues by claiming that the lack of access to both people and places ensured that correspondents could not gather any independent news.[107]

As a result of military control, a great majority of the journalists wrote their reports based on information presented at official briefings at the JIB, from the Pentagon broadcasting studio, or simply tried to pump journalists returning from the pools for information.[108] Fialka mentions that even though the guidelines clearly stated that all information acquired while out with a pool was to be shared with other journalists, a policy of "beggar thy neighbor" was often much closer to the reality.[109] This necessity to share information goes against the very nature of the media-business. First of all, journalists from serious newspapers had to rely on information gathered by journalists who often had no knowledge about military matters or who worked for "small town papers and obscure magazines", such as *Mirabella*.[110] Rick Atkinson from the *Washington Post* claimed that information which was gathered out in the pools was not good enough: "For my purposes, about one in ten has anything in it that's useful…It's really pretty superficial stuff."[111] Second, as in Grenada, having to rely on other journalists for information challenged the competitive aspect of journalism. Journalists had to rely on people who were their rivals back home in the United States.[112]

The scarcity of pool slots also kept alive the system of journalistic dependency on the military for information. Because of few slots, the JIB became the main source of information for journalists.[113] Information retrieved from briefings was revealed as inaccurate after the war. For example, the military had grossly exaggerated to journalists its claims of having an eighty percent rate on bombing missions against Scud missiles. After the war it was revealed that, for every bomb that had actually hit its target, there had been between seventy to seventy-five misses.[114]

2.7 Press Problems with the Pools: Censorship

The Pentagon's "*Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm Ground Rules and Guidelines for News Media*" laid down ground rules for military censorship. Any news story written in a pool had to be subjected to review by the Public Affairs Office before release. The Pentagon

explained that news reports would be reviewed only because of security reasons and this was no attempt to prevent and censor criticism of the military. The reason for conducting a review was to avoid sensitive information about "military plans, capabilities, operations, or vulnerabilities" being published and picked up by Iraqi intelligence.[115] There are, however, incidents that clearly contradict this statement. For example, the military's sensitivity to negative media coverage was revealed when a story about a desert disco was published: the party had been organized by some of the troops and featured "DJ Scud D" and a dance called "The Gas Mask". General Schwarzkopf was furious and the PAO who had cleared the story was heavily reprimanded.[116]

Every pool was accompanied by a PAO. PAOs were not authorized to alter a story they thought unfit, but if they read anything they believed violated the ground rules, they would send it to the closest JIB. A JIB officer would discuss the story with the reporter concerned. If they did not reach an agreement, the story was sent to the Pentagon for final resolution with editors in Washington. Only five reports, 0.03 percent of all stories published before and during the war, had to be resolved in Washington. Of those five, only one was changed.[117]

There seems to be a split opinion to whether the military acted unfavourably when imposing the review system. Many journalists in the press pool viewed the review system as a filter where the military could direct the reports into favourable positions.[118] Malcolm Browne, covering the war for *The New York Times*, argues that the restrictions and rules made each pool member an unpaid employee of the Pentagon, preparing the news in the fashion that the Pentagon wanted.[119] Edward Cody of the *Washington Post* annoyingly announces that "you turn over control of your copy to them and they don't care whether it gets there or not. It's not part of their culture. We, the newspapers, did it by buying into this stupid system of take-me-along."[120]

Counterclaims to this negative assessment of the review system exist. The degree to which journalists were censored and the rate at which reports were transmitted back to the news bureaux seem to depend on what kind of unit the journalists visited, their escort officers, and the type of Public Affairs Officer who was working at the JIB the day the report came in: "you could get an angel or a devil."[121] To journalists covering the war, it seemed at times as if the U.S. Marines and the U.S. Army were from two totally different countries.[122] The Army represented the general attitude that prevailed at the onset of the Gulf War towards the media; the Army was not very cooperative and believed that journalists should not have access to the battlefield. Thomas Rid explains that most senior commanders understood that the American

people needed to know what was going on in the war, but the commanders did not want to deal with journalists themselves.[123] What caused serious problems for the journalists was that it was the senior commanders and not the JIB in Dhahran who controlled the public-affairs assets in the units. For example, this negative attitude made it difficult for journalists to catch a ride on Army helicopters or vehicles, or to gain access to the troops out in the field.[124]

The term "self-imposed news blackout" is highly characteristic of the Army. Malcolm W. Browne reported on March 3 1991 that Major General Patrick H. Brady, Deputy Commanding General of the Sixth Army, had said that

> Some look on news as just another four-letter word, but I believe it is more useful to look at it as a C-letter word; chaos, confusion, contradiction, crime, corruption, color, catastrophe. It does not hurt if you add some S`s: --sex, sensationalism, state secrets.[125]

No significant attempts were made to help journalists send their stories back to Dhahran in time. Using a fax or e-mail was out of the question. Subsequently, the Army's system of helping journalists send news stories back to Dhahran was nicknamed the "pony express".[126] Fialka tells of a specific incident whereby it became evident that it was the commanders who had the final say in how to welcome and help journalists out in the field. He and a colleague, Philip Shenon of *The New York Times*, were the only journalists who were close to a ground battle in which 100,000 soldiers were involved. After watching the battle and writing his report, Fialka needed to get to a phone. The nearest payphone was a two-hour drive away. Shenon, however, was not let out of the encampment area in the Saudi Desert because the Colonel commanding the base had decided that there was a terrorist threat imminent. Instead of making arrangements for the two journalists to get to the nearest phone, the Assistant Public Affairs Officer in the corps, Major David Cook, was more interested in deciding which soldiers were to empty a latrine used by his public-affairs staff. After locating a small military airport twenty minutes away, the journalists were finally provided with a driver, Lieutenant Blumenfeld. He told them that journalists were just a bunch of yuppies who believed that they owned the world. After reaching the military airport and the telephone, Lt. Blumenfeld ushered other people ahead in the line while shouting that all military personnel were to use the phone first since Shenon and his colleague were only journalists. Lt. Blumenfeld then decided that Shenon had been so rude and uncooperative that the journalists should be taken directly back to base. Shenon later managed to get his story through to Dhahran and his report was the only one describing what would later be called a historic Army battle.[127]

The U.S. Marines' attitude towards journalists was the complete opposite of the U.S. Army's. They welcomed journalists with open arms and the media was highly prioritized. A Marine officer explains their view of the media: "[w]e didn't view the news media as a group of people we were supposed to schmooze. We regarded them as an environmental feature of the battlefield, kind of like the rain. If it rains on you, you operate wet."[128] Molly Moore, for example, had no difficulty getting her stories back to her office in Washington. She would type her story on her laptop and then take the floppy disk to the camp communications tent where a sergeant would send it by e-mail to a base in Jubail. In Jubail it would be faxed to Dhahran and copies would be passed out to waiting reporters: "The process could take anywhere from thirty minutes to eight hours, but it beat the courier system which with coffee breaks, flat tires, wrong turns, and lunch stops could take up to a full day to deliver a story to the pressroom in Dhahran."[129]

Rid argues that to understand the difference in the Army's and the Marines' attitudes towards journalists one must look back on history. Compared to the Army, the Marines have always been small in number and often lacked financial resources. In theory, what the Marines did could easily be done by the other three branches of the services. To survive, it was therefore important to ensure the American people's support and gratitude. To do so, the Marines turned to the media.[130] By using the media to show people the importance of the Marines, more people would rally to support their survival as a service. It was therefore important to keep an open mind towards the media on the battlefield. Before the Persian Gulf War was launched, the Pentagon decided that the Army and the Marines would each receive eighteen reporters in different pools. Despite the fact that there were 80,000 Marines compared to 295,000 Army soldiers in Kuwait, the Marines had managed to press the Pentagon to allow fifty-three reporters to accompany them out on the field when the war started.[131] Because of the differences between the Army and the Marines, the quality of the news reports was very uneven. In Marine battles, the news report described the units involved, while in Army battles, units were referred to as being, for example, "VII Corps".[132]

2.8 Military Justifications for Implementing a Restrictive Public-Affairs Strategy

It is possible to identify three reasons why the media did not receive full access. The first two reasons are connected to the issue of routine knowledge assets. First, both the military and the media had learned from previous encounters with each other. In both Vietnam and Grenada, the media had realized that a dependency on military information did not favor its role of being a check on the government. As a result, the media, both before and during the Persian

Gulf War, contemplated accessing the Kuwaiti and Iraqi deserts due to an ingrained distrust of the military and a fear of political and military cover-ups in the war. The military, for its part, advocated a restrictive public-affairs strategy. Many within the military still believed that negative media coverage had forced the U.S. to withdraw from Vietnam. In "The Changing Face of Battlefield Reporting" Richard H. Seinnreich writes that "[i]t seemed that the military public affairs operation went to war in the Persian Gulf not just against Saddam Hussein but also against the Saigon press corps of 1972."[133] To Seinnreich it seemed as if there were two adversaries that caught the military's attention, a foreign and a national one.

Second, the media were not given full access because of poor military public-affairs planning. Poor planning can be linked to Rid's military routine knowledge assets. In his strategy research project, *Seeing Through the Conflict: Military-Media Relations*, Lieutenant Colonel John B. Snyder (U.S. Army), cites Pascale Combelles-Siegel. Combelles-Siegel quotes Navy Captain Mike Sherman, the JIB Director in Daharan: "We were the bastard children of the operation."[134] According to Sherman, he did not have enough resources to run the JIB properly. John Fialka, a *Wall Street Journal* reporter, also argues that the ingrained hostility towards the media among military personnel caused the Pentagon to fail to arrange for adequate resources to accommodate all the journalists who wanted to cover the war.[135]

Third, Thomas Rid, Lieutenant Colonel Marc D. Feldman (U.S. Air Force), and Johanna Neuman argue that the war environment in the Persian Gulf War greatly influenced the military's continuing advocacy of a restricted public-affairs strategy.[136] The war environment in the Persian Gulf War cannot be compared to earlier ones. Between 1983 and 1990 there had been great technological advances: for example, satellite television and telephones had become everyday equipment for many of the journalists covering the war.

Technological advances caused the military two main problems. First, when journalists were out in the field they could report on anything they saw and heard. In a matter of seconds, news reports could be spread around the world. General Norman Schwarzkopf, Commander of the Coalition Forces in the Persian Gulf War, intended to control the media to prevent politicians, allies and the American public starting to speculate about and second-guess the war's progress after reading and watching news reports.[137] The prevailing attitude, stretching from General Schwarzkopf at the top of the command chain down to field commanders, was that a controlled media was an element desired in the war.[138] General Andrew Davis, former Chief of Public Affairs of the Marines, concedes that "the way the press was controlled was access to the battlefield controlled."[139] Rid argues that because

operational security was at risk, it became extremely important to provide information in a controlled environment.[140] As General Schwarzkopf told his closest commanders:

> You are going to be bombarded with questions by the press. I don't want you to discuss military operations. Period. I do not want you to discuss your capabilities. Period. And you should teach *every* one of your officers the same thing. I don't care what Pfc. Snuffy says, but I do care when some officer gets so enamored of the press that he has to shoot off his mouth. I'm telling you I'm going to deal absolutely brutally, *brutally*, with anyone I feel compromises classified information.[141]

Schwarzkopf understood that he was being harsh, but he was also convinced that American newspapers and television reports had become Iraq's best source of military intelligence.[142] By virtue of the media reporting independently from the battlefield, Saddam Hussein would be able to keep abreast of U.S. military progress and setbacks on the battlefield, and young and inexperienced journalists might reveal the positions of U.S. units either orally in reports from the field, or by their satellite phones transmitting electronic signals picked up by Iraqi satellites.[143] If information about an unsuccessful U.S. air campaign were published or broadcast, Hussein would know that the U.S. war strategy was failing and his chances for winning the war increased. Aware of the Vietnam syndrome, Hussein had set up his own JIB at the al-Rashid Hotel in Baghdad. His intention was to have his public-affairs officers infuse the press with propaganda by targeting journalists who had earlier complained about the news-blackout policy in Grenada.[144]

Major Edward L. English explains that due to new technology, the media in the Persian Gulf War could no longer be considered only an enemy. The media, compared to earlier, had become part of the battlefield.[145] To prevent Iraqi propaganda from being disseminated in the U.S. media, it became important to portray a positive image of the war contrary to the one Hussein sought to portray. Projecting the image of successful U.S. military campaigns out on the field became an essential part of the war strategy: media pools were considered a prime actor in representing this image.

2.9 Evaluation of Restrictive Public-Affairs Strategy in the Persian Gulf War

In the aftermath of the war Pete Williams, Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), told *The New York Times* that the media had provided the American people with the best coverage that they ever had, and that Hussein's public-affairs campaign did not have a negative effect due to the pools' access to the battlefield and information.[146] The American people agreed. English argues that the "American public viewed the military's restraint of the press with favor and viewed the American press' coverage of the war favourably as well."[147] Richard Zoglin cites two surveys, a *Times Mirror* poll and a *Time/CNN* poll, both conducted

in January 1991. In the *Times Mirror* poll, almost eighty percent of the participants believed that media coverage of the Persian Gulf War had been good or excellent. In the *Time/CNN* poll seventy-nine percent argued that they received enough information about the war while eighty-eight percent answered that under the war's circumstances they supported some censorship of the press. The Time/CNN findings correlate with the findings of a *Pew Reseach Center* survey where shortely after the war fifty-eight percent of the participants favored government censorship of news that might threaten national security and fifty-seven believed that the military should exercise more control over how news bureaus reported on war.[148]

Zoglin believes that many Americans supported military restrictions because journalists has used much time arguing, protesting and complaining about the restrictions imposed upon them, "Whatever the validity of those complaints, the arguments over the rules of coverage may portray the press as a band of arrogant, self-involved whiners."[149] Zoglin presents the idea that when the U.S. military engages in a war that goes according to plan, a "rally-around-the-president" effect kicks in. The patriotic feeling that is created makes peoples ask themselves: "What are they first-journalists or Americans?"[150] Zoglin's idea of an increased feeling of patriotism correlates with a *CBS* poll cited in "News Viewing, Authoritarianism, and Attitudes Toward the Gulf War". The poll reveals that eighty-three percent of the participants were "proud about what the United States is doing in the Persian Gulf."[151]

Although large sections of the American people had been in favor of the war, Colonel Barry E. Willey (U.S. Army) argues that a restrictive public-affairs strategy resulted in the U.S. public not having the opportunity to see what a remarkable job the military had executed during the war. The military had thrown away a perfect opportunity to increase American civilians' sentiments about their military. When the Army won the largest tank battle in U.S. military history, there was only one report describing it. Only the Marines had welcomed the journalists. As a result their units were highlighted, thereby improving the unit's morale and, more importantly, journalists were left with a positive understanding of the Marines.[152]

Peter Braestrup argues that "[t]he widening chasm between the American journalists and the military that was created during the Vietnam War remained largely unabridged"[153] and news editors condemned the military's public-affairs system, systematically calling the Persian Gulf War "the most under-covered major conflict in modern American history."[154] Executives from major press organizations, including *The New York Times, Washington Post, Time, Newsweek, Los Angeles Times, The Wall Street Journal* and *Chicago Tribune*[155], refused to continue to accept the NMP's ground rules and demanded new guidelines for future

military operations. The news group believed that the guidelines did not offer any kind of coverage that citizens of a democracy are entitled to have.[156] After negotiating with the Pentagon for eight months, a new agreement concerning media coverage was announced. On May 21 1992, the Pentagon implemented the new *DoD Principles for News Media Coverage of DoD Operations*.[157] The main points of the *Statement of Principles* (see Appendix B) were that in future U.S. military operations, journalists would be placed in pools only when absolutely necessary. Open and independent reporting was to be the primary means of coverage but journalists had to abide by a clear set of military security ground rules in order to protect U.S. forces and operations and. Commanders were also encouraged to personally involve in the planning for media coverage.

Concepts and procedures highlighted in the *DoD Principles* can be found in earlier DoD documents, but both Combelles-Siegel and Venable argue that the principles represented a whole new era in relations between the media and military because the document clearly states that pools shall no longer be the principal means of gathering information on the battlefield and that security reviews will be replaced with the process of security at the source, that military personnel is obligated to not reveal classified information when interviewed.[158]

Chapter 3

Experimental Public-Affairs: the Bosnia Intervention and the Afghanistan War

3.0 Military Public-Affairs Strategy in the Bosnia Intervention

On August 30 1995 NATO launched the humanitarian military campaign *Operation Deliberate Force* (ODF) to end the civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to Ted Galen Carpenter, vice president for defense and foreign policy studies at the *Cato Institute*, President Bill Clinton defended his decision to use American military force in Bosnia by arguing that a peaceful and stabile Europe was of fundamental interest to the U.S. Afraid that the Bosnian conflict would spread to other parts in Europe, the U.S. could not afford close its eyes and risk being dragged into the war at a later and much more critical stage of the war.[1] James Steinberg, director of policy planning at the State Department argued that "Without U.S. leadership in Bosnia, we would face the imminent danger of a widening war that could embroil our allies, undermine NATO's credibility, destabilize nearby democracies, and drive a wedge between the United States and Russia."[2]

Journalists have been allowed to accompany military units in the past, but ODF was the first time ever in American history were the Pentagon and the U.S. Army named the procedure "embedding".[3] A total of thirty-three journalists embedded with fifteen different U.S. Army units. Twenty-four journalists were American, nine were British, French or German.[4] In her strategy research project, *The CNN Effect: Strategic Enabler or Operational Risk?*, Margaret H. Belknap (U.S. Army) writes that the decision to embed journalists was a "'bold and innovative' move by the Army in military-media relations."[5] As illustrated in previous chapters, the Army has not been known for its open or friendly public-affairs strategy; but during ODF, the Army struck a deal with the media. Army officials argued that if the media wanted access to units, they would have to spend at least two weeks with them.[6]

The Army decided to embed the media because it believed that this would ultimately benefit the Army's needs. First, the Army wanted to separate the military operational war effort from the political aspect of the mission. Major General William Nash, Commander of the Army's First Armored Division, explains that his desire to separate the military effort from political decision-making resulted from personal experiences gained in Vietnam. He believes that the U.S. military was "caught in a posture of justifying the nation's involvement

in Vietnam."[7] In Bosnia he wanted to show the American people that the Army was simply following orders assigned to it by higher authorities.

Second, high-ranking Army commanders believed that if journalists spent considerable time with military units, they would learn what being a soldier meant and what kind of life soldiers live. For example, media embeds had to sleep in the same unheated tents and eat the same food as soldiers. The Army hoped that when media embeds experienced the everyday life of a soldier, they would write articles and produce television documentaries that would present the Army positively.[8] Embedding journalists would also lead to Army accomplishments in Bosnia being noticed, unlike the tank battle in the Persian Gulf War mentioned in chapter 2.

Third, Dr. Donald P. Wright and Lieutenant Colonel Terry R. Ferrell (U.S. Army) also argue that the Army believed that if the American people read and heard about the great job the Army was doing, they would support it much more than if they had been less informed about the military accomplishments and the sacrifices soldiers made when fighting for their country. Major General William Nash argue that

> We believed that public support for our conducting the mission would be immeasurably heightened by the stories written or broadcast by reporters who had true access to the soldiers doing the real work. We often allowed media representatives to be present at points of confrontation…. What a great story to show the American people![9]

Support for the Army would also create more support for the overall U.S. military intervention in Bosnia.[10] Fourth, the media could be used as a tool to force the enemy opposition into compliance. Major General William Nash explains that the Army wanted to embed the media because their news reports could influence former enemy fractions in Bosnia to comply with the terms of the Dayton Peace Accord.[11] When the Serbs received favorable comments about their compliance with the Dayton Accord, they became even more positive towards it.[12]

3.0.1 "Ricks' Rule"

Wall Street Journal's Thomas E. Ricks was embedded with the U.S Army First Armored Division's First Brigade whose task was to patrol one of Bosnia's most fought-over pieces of terrain.[13] He was welcomed in a friendly manner by the brigade's Commander, Colonel Gregory Fontenot. While embedded, Ricks attended staff meetings and reconnaissance patrols inside Bosnia. He was also well-informed about the brigade's sensitive operations plans. Richard J. Newman argues that Ricks' level of access to information placed him in a

privileged position because most media embeds were not allowed to accompany their units while they were entering Bosnia.[14]

Ground rules targeting the way in which media embeds could interview and quote soldiers did not exist in the first weeks of ODF.[15] It was up to the commanders of the units to determine what media embeds could and could not publish. *Washington Post* journalist Rick Atkinson was embedded with Major General Nash in Bosnia. Major General Nash decided that every conversation between Atkinson and U.S. military personnel would be off the record.[16] If Atkinson wanted to quote soldiers or commanders in his reports he had to get Nash's consent before sending the reports to the bureau in Washington.[17] Ricks, however, had only one rule to follow: never publish classified information.[18] Because Fontenot had only placed restrictions on classified information, Ricks assumed that all other kinds of information were classified as "on the record". Ricks is quoted in Newman's article "Burned by the Press: A Commander's Experience" in which Ricks says that "I think it was explicit that everything else was on the record because of the stuff that was off the record."[19]

Ricks' interpretation of this rule led to his controversial article published on December 27 1995. In "U.S. Brings to Bosnia Tactics That Tamed Wild West", Ricks wrote an excerpt of a conversation that Fontenot had conducted with his soldiers. During the conversation, Fontenot had warned two of his Afro-American soldiers that Croats were racists and it would be interesting to see what kinds of situations they would encounter. Croats, according to Fontenot, "kill people for the color of their skins."[20] The article also claimed that Fontenot believed that the U.S. would be involved in Bosnia for an extensive period of time. This assessment contrasted with President Clinton's claim that the U.S. would be out of Bosnia within a year.

Both of Fontenot's comments created much controversy among his military superiors. Fontenot was placed under investigation to determine whether he had used race to motivate Afro-American soldiers and whether he had shown a "gross lack of judgment" in revealing his personal points of view to a journalist. Fontenot was also accused of being disloyal in disagreeing with President Clinton's assessment of the length of the mission.[21] In the end, no disciplinary action was taken, but many inside the military believed that his comments had been the sole reason why he was not promoted to General.[22]

Many Army soldiers were no longer positive to embedding journalists after witnessing how Ricks' article had damaged Fontenot's career. The Fontenot incident left a permanent mark on media-embedding guidelines. To prevent the Army returning to a closed and restrictive public-affairs strategy due to its fear of the kind of news coverage it might be

subjected to in the future, the Pentagon implemented new rules concerning how media embeds were to interview military personnel in future missions. The rules stated that media embeds could no longer quote military sources unless they had explicit permission. This particular rule was known as "Ricks' Rule".[23] Journalists had to inform their sources of the way in which their quotations would be contextualized, and soldiers could also retract direct quotes from an article.[24]

The Reporters' Committee for Press Freedom quotes the Pentagon's spokesman, Ken Bacon, when discussing "Ricks' rule". According to Bacon, the new guidelines were designed to ease the U.S. Army's opposition to embedding. Bacon favored the rule since it was "not reasonable to expect ... anybody in the units to be on guard and talking on the record 24 hours a day in all situations." Bacon believes that the rules ensured that the military would allow journalists to access units and carry out their jobs.[25]

3.1 Press Evaluation of "Ricks' Rule" and Embedding in the Bosnia Intervention

Rick Atkinson believes that the Army "took something of a gamble" when deciding to embed journalists. One of Pentagon's justifications for embedding journalists was that the procedure would create support for U.S. interventions in Bosnia as well as support for the Army. But, as Atkinson argues, with journalists hanging around all the time, information commanders wanted to keep for themselves would eventually be picked up by journalists.[26] Atkinson himself wrote a story that placed the Army in a less favorable light:

> General Nash would have preferred that the issue [that the Army was in theory responsible for protecting war-crimes investigators trying to get to mass graves] not come up until some time in the spring, when all his forces were deployed. I know this because, in his subtle fashion, he said "I would prefer that the issue not come up until some time in the spring, when all our forces have been deployed."[27]

Atkinson nevertheless went ahead with the story. It appeared in the *Washington Post* on December 27 under the headline "U.S. Cautious on Opening Roads to Area of Reported Massacre", and he remembers that Major General Nash "was less than thrilled" about his news article.[28]

When asked whether the Army should embed journalists in future operations, Atkinson answered affirmatively. He believed that the embedding procedure had created favorable news coverage of the military in general. Despite negative incidents such as the Fontenot case, he believes that the cost/benefit balance connected to the embedding procedure benefitted the Army and the First Armored. When media embeds have access to soldiers and commanders, they gain extensive knowledge about the military's technical and operational

challenges. As the military draft had been abolished after the Vietnam War, journalistic knowledge about military matters was no longer as common as it used to be. Atkinson argues that there is a distinct lack of personal military experience among reporters. Many reporters cannot tell the difference between an F-16 and an M-16.[29] In addition, Newman explains that in the post-Cold War media environment, the budgets of many news bureaus for covering the military have decreased.[30] When journalists embed they are provided with much needed military knowledge. If they understand why decisions are made, embeds will accordingly write articles indicating that American soldiers perform their jobs with "professional competence, humor, and diligence."[31] Atkinson also believes that the embedding procedure benefitted the needs of the media.[32] If journalists had not been embedded, they would not have been able to report on ODF in such great detail. Embedding provided the media with an opportunity to inform the American people about what their soldiers were engaged in.

Many journalists concur with Atkinson's assessment of the embedding procedure. According to Newman, many journalists did not, for example, oppose the new rules imposed by the Pentagon.[33] Newman cites a 1999 Gallup poll conducted for the Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation. Ninety-five percent of media respondents believed that "Ricks' Rule" reduced the risk of revealing classified military information.[34] Newman argues that if journalists could have reported on almost anything they wanted to during a military operation, the Army would refuse altogether to embed journalists in the future. "Ricks' Rule" made military personnel less critical and skeptical of journalists because they could control to a certain degree what was written about them.

3.2 Military Evaluation of Embedding in the Bosnia Intervention

Army soldiers and commanders do not agree as to whether embedding was a success or a failure. A majority of Army soldiers believed that embedding had been a failure. Four years after Bosnia, Army soldiers still believed that a media presence on the battlefield had not favored the military. In the 1999 Gallup poll mentioned earlier in this chapter, more than fifty percent of one- and two-star officers answered that they believed that media exposure was "fairly risky" or "very risky". When asked whether "Ricks' Rule" reduced the risk of sensitive and classified military information being revealed, only forty-three percent of military respondents believed that it did so.[35]

Opposition to a media presence and media embedding during military operations is confirmed by the way in which students at the Army War College felt about the media. Newman quotes Major John Suttle, Public Affairs Officer for the First Armored Division in

Bosnia. When participating at a 1999 seminar on the media, Suttle learned that the Fontenot case had influenced the way soldiers regarded the media, "'That's immediately what they zeroed in on,' he says. 'They said, 'why should I talk to the media after what happened to Fontenot? I have nothing to gain from talking to the media.'"[36] Negative sentiments towards media embeds seem to be based on a fear that the media could ruin the careers of military staff. Indeed, media embeds' news reports could affect the soldiers personally because the soldiers' names could be published and could be linked to negative episodes and incidents.

Embedding in Bosnia was considered a success by unit commanders.[37] Major General Nash was extremely comfortable with the media in Bosnia: he found most embeds extremely honorable and competent.[38] Unlike soldiers and officers on the ground, administrative military personnel in the Pentagon and high-ranking officers evaluated the embedding procedure on the basis of the way in which it had affected the military as a whole. Although the Fontenot incident had produced some unfavorable sentiments towards the media, it was agreed that, in general, embedding had improved relations between the military and the media. Nash argues that media embeds had helped to separate military conduct and performance from the political aspect of the operation. By separating these two different aspects, the Army had maintained the American people's support.[39] In other words, the Pentagon evaluated the embedding procedure in the way it affected the military as a whole, and not in the way it affected Sergeant A's or Private B's careers. Nash states that the most important military public-affairs lesson learned in Bosnia was that the military and the media had to agree on pre-set ground rules before engaging in combat together. If guidelines and rules are agreed upon before an operation is launched, both the media and the military will be able to cooperate from a more positive stance. The military will not have to worry about the way in which it is presented to the American public, while the media will not have to worry about being restricted or denied access just because some commanders bear a grudge towards them.[40]

3.3 The American Public and American Military Intervention in Bosnia

Although experimental public-affairs strategy in the form of embedding produced higher favorability rates for the military, embedding did, however, not produce political capital for President Clinton. According to a Gallup poll, in December 1995 fifty-four percent of Americans disapproved of American military involvement in Bosnia while forty-one percent approved American involvement.[41] Two possible explanations to way American involvement received such a low favorability rate is identified. First, Americans did not understand the Clinton administration's policy in Bosnia. Only twenty-five percent believed that Clinton had

a clear policy and only ten percent out of the twenty-five percent believed that they understood that policy. Second, Americans did not believe that there were no American interests that had to be protected in Bosnia and thus there were no reason for getting involved in the operation. The report *American Public Support for U.S. Military Operations from Mogadishu to Bagdad* found that sixty-seven percent of participants in a Gallup poll conducted on November 27 1995, believed that there were no American interests that had to be protected in Bosnia, while twenty-six did believe that there were interests that needed to be protected.[42]

3.4 Military Public-Affairs Strategy in the Afghanistan War

On September 11 2001, the U.S. was attacked by terrorists. Three days later, on September 14, President George W. Bush announced a global War on Terrorism (WoT). In his book *The Politics of the Presidency*, Joseph A. Pika argues that in America, many people have "expressive needs for confidence, security, reassurance, and pride in citizenship." The presidency serves to fulfill these emotional and psychological needs.[43] Military historian John Keegan argues that any president who publicly announces that he intends to fight for American values and punish the enemies of the U.S. will receive high levels of support.[44] It should therefore come as no surprise that after experiencing a terrorist-attack, large segments of the American public supported President Bush proposed homeland defense strategy.[45]

"Operation Enduring Freedom" (OEF) in Afghanistan was launched on October 7 2001. Before the bombing began, news bureaus were pressuring for access to war information and military units.[46] Raymondo Villarreal Jr. writes in his thesis *The Role of the Department of Defense Embedded Reporter Program in Future Conflicts* that despite external pressure, there was very little open and independent press reporting on the ground.[47] The military cannot be accused of creating a news blackout because, as Villarreal explains, it adhered to the 2000 reauthorization of the DoD's *Principles for News Media Coverage of DoD Operations* (Appendix B), DoD Directive 5122.5 *Statement of DoD Principles for New Media*. Directive 5122.5 states that whenever journalists cover U.S. military operations, they should be able to report independently and have access to information. Directive 5122.5 was put into practice when a few journalists were granted access to U.S. Navy ships and the U.S. Air Force when OEF commenced.[48] Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, however, did not allow journalists to report independently from the battlefield during the first phase of the war. Journalists who wanted to embed with U.S. combat units on the ground were systematically denied access.

Villareal, James DeFrank, the Pentagon's Director for Press Operations in OEF, and Christopher Paul argue that the Pentagon disregarded Directive 5122.5 because of the nature of the war. First, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld claimed that priority number one in Afghanistan was to develop relations with the Northern Alliance.[49] In an interview with Thomas Rid, DeFrank argued that the U.S. military first of all had to establish a good relationship with Afghan and Pakistani tribal warlords, no easy task since the warlords were often not interested in cooperating with the media. Second, the adversaries of the U.S., Al Qaeda and the Taliban, are non-state actors who use guerrilla tactics when fighting. Indeed, their tactics are similar to those of the Viet Cong in North Vietnam: they blend in with civilians who in turn provide them with shelter and food. Geography and a lack of stability in Afghanistan also contribute to the difficulty of waging war there: rugged mountains, caves, deserts, a lack of infrastructure, and internal wars between local warlords made it very difficult to fight the enemy.[50] The level of difficulty meant that U.S. Special Forces had to stabilize areas before any conventional units could be called in. DeFrank argues that it was impossible to let journalists embed with the Special Forces because this would reveal their secret tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs). If TTPs were revealed to sources outside the military, Special Forces would not be able to use them again.[51] Reacting to constant pressure from news bureaus and editors that wanted their journalists to access U.S. ground units, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, Victoria Clarke, argued that the media had to respect the unconventional nature of the mission and that the media could not automatically expect access to a military operation because they had been allowed access to earlier ones.[52] Clarke's argument reveals that the media and military culture were still at odds with one another. To keep important allies happy and secure operational goals, the military in Afghanistan was highly dependent on operational security. Journalists, however, craved openness and full access to U.S. combat units.

3.4.1 Coalition Information Centers and Media Embeds

Due to the unconventional nature of OEF, the Pentagon decided on a two-pronged public-affairs strategy. The first part of the strategy was implemented during the initial stage of OEF. Because journalists could not embed with the Special Forces, they had to be briefed about the progress of the war to prevent a news blackout. The first step was to establish coalition information centers at which journalists could be briefed about the progress of the war. To satisfy the American public's enormous demand for information on the WoT, journalists were under constant pressure. As in the Persian Gulf War, the Taliban sought to take advantage of

this pressure for news by using journalists as mouthpieces for its propaganda. The Taliban, for example, tried to present a negative image of the American war effort and intervention in Afghanistan by claiming that the U.S. was purposefully targeting civilians.[53] To prevent the Taliban gaining the upper hand in the information war, the Pentagon, in collaboration with the State Department, launched a media-information campaign in November 2001.[54]

There were two main reasons why the Pentagon decided to launch a media campaign. First, if rumors about Americans targeting civilians were allowed to travel from village to village and city to city, the U.S. would face increasing hostility from Afghan civilians. Second, since independent journalists were talking to civilians, they would most likely pay some attention to the civilians' claims of the U.S forces targeting them and report this to the American people. In a worst-case scenario, many Americans could subsequently develop an animosity towards the U.S. military's war -effort and the government's intervention in the country. The main element in the media campaign was the "Coalition Information Centers" (CICs). CICs were established in Islamabad, London, and Washington. According to Rid, the CICs had two characteristics. First, the centers were mainly influenced by the global twenty-four hour news cycle. Due to large geographical distances and time zones, incorrect information was easily spread all over the world before the Pentagon could counter Taliban propaganda and inaccurate information. Ari Fleischer, President Bush's spokesman, said that the CICs would "operate around the clock in Washington, London and Pakistan to stop the Taliban from scoring propaganda points during the wee hours in Washington."[55]

Second, the CICs had to be proactive instead of reactive. Instead of constantly trying to counterbalance propaganda, the CICs "infused" the media with positive stories. Being proactive produced results. By emphasizing positive progress and the good work done in the country, negative stories were overshadowed. Also, U.S. allies were reassured when they saw that the OEF was a success. The Pentagon hoped that the allies, when reassured that they were part of a successful military campaign that was attaining its pre-set goals, would continue to contribute with capital and military support.[56]

Although the military was not as actively engaged in selling the war politically as it had been during the Vietnam War, many people were wary of the military's procedure of manipulating the American people and its allies into believing that the war was going well and that progress was being made. When asked about the Pentagon's role in producing news, Victoria Clark claimed that the Pentagon believed that the American people both needed and deserved to hear from their own leaders what their country was accomplishing. She remarked that the CICs were not only presenting positive stories. The CICs were, according to her,

working to disseminate as much news and information about the war as possible, and this also included less positive news.[57]

The second part of Pentagon's two-pronged public-affairs plan served to cover the American people's "right to know" and support the media's efforts to act as a Fourth Estate. The Pentagon sought to embed journalists with military units as soon as conventional combat units entered the ground war. This occurred six weeks into the operation.[58] To prevent that embeds published information that threatened military personnel security and safety, embeds had to follow military ground rules (Appendix C).[59]

Adhering to their long-standing tradition of welcoming the media, the Marines were eager to have journalists to write about them and their accomplishments. Rob Colenso Jr., a retired Marine and Managing Editor of the magazine *Marine Corps Time*, explained in a *New York Times* article that "when they [the military] are making history, they want it known that marines are making it."[60] Marine units subsequently became the first ones to have journalists present while engaged in actual combat. On November 25, without informing the Pentagon, three print journalists, a television cameraman, and a photographer were invited to attend classified briefings onboard the vessel *USS Peleliu* during "Operation Swift Freedom" (OSF). The *Peleliu* was the lead ship of the attack force. More than 9,000 Marines and Navy sailors were distributed between the force's six ships.[61] The journalists onboard, however, worked under very "basic" conditions, encountering logistic restraints and military restrictions that independent journalists did not have to consider. Despite these obstacles, embeds onboard *USS Peleliu* produced news reports that were unmatched by independent journalists in terms of quality and information.[62] Since the Marines embedded only a few journalists, the Pentagon was heavily criticized by chiefs of news bureaus who argued that Victoria Clarke should have activated the NMPS and allowed more journalists to access units during OSF.[63]

After witnessing media embedding during OSF, the Army component's Chief Public Affairs Officer, Colonel Rick Thomas, asserted in an interview with Thomas Rid that it seemed as if both the Marines and the journalists had benefited from the embedding system.[64] In late December, the Pentagon, with Army commanders consent, secretly invited a few journalists to embed with Army units. When the media embeds finally reached their units, most of the fighting in that area had already ceased. Instead, the media embeds were left to cover the everyday life of a Special Force A-Team, which, as Thomas Rid explains, was quite sensational and newsworthy in itself since this had been unimaginable earlier in the war.[65] Sean Naylor, an experienced *Army Times* journalist, argues that the Army had deliberately chosen the units because it knew that they were not going to be engaged in any combat when

the media embeds were scheduled to be there.[66] Naylor does not provide any answer why the Army did not want embeds to see real action. However, one possible explanation for the Army choosing to embed journalists during a quiet period is that the Army has always been much more skeptical of the media than other service branches have been, and it needed to test the media and what type of coverage they produced before allowing them to cover real combat.

A third attempt to embed journalists took place during Operation Anaconda (OA), March 1-18 2002. The goal of OA was to encircle and squeeze the estimated 2,000 remaining Al-Qaeda and Taliban soldiers who were hiding in the heavily fortified Ahah-i-kot Valley. In the aftermath, OA has been called the largest reported American ground battle since Operation Desert Storm in 1991. Six journalists were embedded with the 101st Airborn Division's 3rd Brigade in Bagram.[67] By allowing embeds to witness and cover real combat, the 101st Airborn Division's 3rd Brigade made history. Naylor argues that he believes that OA was the first time in modern history that the military knew that there was going to be heavy combat, but nevertheless allowed journalists to embed.[68]

3.5 Press Evaluation of Embedding in the Afghanistan War

The Pentagon's policy of restricting access to units during the first stage of the war was taken to court by publisher Larry Flynt, famed for his magazine, *Hustler*. On October 30 2001, Flynt sent two requests to Victoria Clarke: first, he advocated his journalists being embedded with ground combat units; second, he requested they be given free access to all U.S. military operations in Afghanistan. As with all other requests concerning embedding with ground combat units during the first stage of the war, Flynt's requests were refused due to the nature of the war. He was told that there were other aspects of the war that his journalists could cover, such as air strikes, humanitarian missions as well as interviewing soldiers. Flynt and his publishing company *L.F.P.,* Inc filed a lawsuit against Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld and the DoD on November 16, 2001. Mr. Flynt argued that both the refusal to allow his journalists to embed and Directive 5122.5 were unconstitutional because this violated his historical and constitutional rights of access to the battlefield. According to Flynt, journalists had the right to "go in [to battle] with the military" and he believed that the military was obliged to accommodate the press because the press is considered a check on government. Refusing to allow his journalists to embed deprived them of their First Amendment rights.

Both the District Count and the Court of Appeal dismissed the case. As illustrated in Grenada, the case of *Richmond Newspapers, Inc. v. Virginia* had shown that the press had a

constitutional right to access a courtroom while in session simply because the press, in the past, had always been granted that access. There is, however, no historical precedent of allowing the media access to U.S. battlefields. Even if there were such a precedent, both courts argued that Directive 5122.5 did not violate the First Amendment because *Richmond Newspapers* stated that a trial judge may impose reasonable limitations on access to a trial. Such limitations could for example be based on the need to maintain a quiet and orderly setting. Directive 5122.5 does not impose many limitations on the press. According to the Directive, open and independent reporting is to be the principal means when covering U.S. military operations, and field commanders should permit journalists to ride on military vehicles when possible.[69] Due to the nature of the war and the Pentagon's emphasis on operational security and secrecy, it was not considered possible to embed journalists during the first stage of OEF. Journalists seeking to cover the war had thus no choice but to wait until the Special Forces had accomplished their goals and conventional combat units could be implemented into the war effort.

The clash between the media and military culture becomes especially evident when examining how both independent and press embedded journalists experienced OEF. Many journalists heavily criticized the policy of not embedding journalists with the U.S. Special Forces. Michael Getler, ombudsman for the *Washington Post*, argued that the military should have made an effort to embed one or two reporters with the Special Forces right from the beginning.[70] Peter Baker, of *Washington Post*, had his own personal encounter with the military's policy of restricting journalistic access. When covering the battle of Shahikot in eastern Afghanistan, his convoy was shelled by enemy attackers. Although they sought protection at a nearby American base, U.S. Special Forces refused to take the convoy in and left them to spend the night out in the car outside the base where they could possibly be attacked by enemy fighters once more. In his article, "On Their Own", Baker wrote:

> So goes the relationship between the U.S. armed forces and the war correspondents covering the action in Afghanistan. More so than during any major war in American history, journalists here have been left to their own devices, left literally and figuratively to take their chances in freezing cars outside the protection of the U.S. military cocoon. The Pentagon's secrecy policy has not only severely restricted access to unfiltered information about the prosecution of the war against the Taliban and al Qaeda, it has helped create an especially risky environment for the working press.[71]

By May 2002, eight journalists had died in Afghanistan since the beginning of the war. This figure represents more journalistic war casualties than in any of the United States' military operations of the 1990s combined. Baker admits that it is impossible to speculate whether more journalists would have survived in Afghanistan if the U.S. military had been more

cooperative with the media. But he argues that the lack of an alternative forced journalists to travel on their own into perilous areas and engage in volatile situations.[72]

Being accepted as press embeds was a tiresome process for journalists. Michael Gordon of *The New York Times* described military public affairs and the embedding system as appallingly bad. First, getting out in the field as press embeds was problematic for journalists. Embeds were not allowed to cover military units independently: they were sent out in groups. On arriving in Afghanistan, Mr. Gordon's intention was to embed, but he was systematically told that his group was to be embedded with ground forces but that this would not occur that week, but maybe next week and so on. Feeling that he was wasting his time by waiting and being restricted by the Pentagon, he decided to go to Tora Bora independently. There he risked his life when caught in the crossfire of Afghan warlords.[73]

Access to information was limited both for embeds and journalists covering the war independently. The American historian Anthony R. DiMaggio argues that "in retrospect, it seems clear that the mainstream press was prohibited from, and refused to, engage in in-depth, on-the-ground reporting in Afghanistan."[74] Carol Morello, an embedded *Washington Post* journalist, encountered great difficulty writing relevant news articles about the war since she was only shuttled back and forth between less important stories, only covering church services and promotion ceremonies. When embedded with Charlie Company for a night, the most exciting thing that happened, according to her, was that a camel appeared and stuck its nose in a foxhole.[75] Similarly, when her unit was stationed at Camp Rhino near Kandahar, they were informed about an incoming convoy of injured American and Afghan soldiers, but they were systematically denied access to the soldiers:

> A photographer says 'Can I go take pictures?' He's told no. One of the print reporters says, 'Can we at least go stand there and watch?' We're told no. The public affairs officer says, 'What, you want to go see dead Americans?' We said, 'No, we think this is our job.' We said, 'Can we talk to the pilots who flew them back?' 'No.' 'Can we talk to any of the medics when they're done?' 'Well, they're too tired.' 'Can we talk to any of the Afghans who have minor injuries?' 'No, we don't have a translator.'[76]

For Morello, the incident at Camp Rhino became a metaphor for what her pool's entire trip was about: an incredible amount of press restriction.[77] The very term "embedded" also caused friction between the military and the press. In Morello's view, being a press embed meant spending weeks, and sometimes even months with a unit. Despite going out with a group of reporters, and being referred to as "embedded" by the Public Affairs Officer, they spent only four or five days with the unit, and barely got to know the soldiers or interview them.[78]

Gordon wrote about the military strategic effort in the war. Due to his choice of topic his sources should ideally have been Americans, but he did not manage to develop a

relationship with the American military despite repeated efforts to do so.[79] Similarly, Baker, in the six months he had covered the war, had never spoken to an American soldier. "Friends back home were shocked to learn this. 'I just assumed 50 percent of your information came from Americans,' said one, a reporter who follows the news closely. More like zero percent."[80] Susan Glasser of the *Washington Post* felt that the American military was a sort of shadowy presence and she did not speak to a military official until March 2002 of OA.[81]

This policy of not embedding journalists from the beginning of the war influenced what the American people knew about the war. If they only received information that was presented at military briefings they would, according to Baker, never know about civilian casualties, mistaken raids, or military setbacks of any kind. To illustrate how the people's right to information was amputated, he comments on an incident of an Afghan source telling him two days after a battle that the first American casualty had died from friendly fire. The Pentagon did not share this information with the American people until weeks afterwards.[82]

3.6 Public Opinion Polls

A *USA Today*/*Gallup* poll, conducted on March 14-15 2009, poll shows that at the beginning of November 2001, eighty-nine percent of the poll's participants believed that it had not been a mistake to send military forces to Afghanistan. By the beginning of January 2002, the number of people advocating the war had increased to ninety-three percent. People who believed that sending military forces to Afghanistan was a mistake decreased from nine percent to six percent.[83]

The poll show that journalists' complaints of being prevented from reporting and not being able to provide Americans with enough information about the war do not correlate to Americans' own perceptions of the war. That ninety-three percent believed in January 2002 that it was not a mistake to send American forces to Afghanistan leads this research paper to assume that the Pentagon's two-pronged public-affairs strategy did indeed provide the American public with enough information about the war. This assumption is based on the indicator that such a large percentage of people were able to make an overall assessment of American military engagement. If a large majority of Americans had felt that they were not provided with enough information about the war, a much larger drop in Bush's favorability rate should have been detected by the polls as President Bush was the Commander-in-Chief, superior to the Pentagon which had imposed the two-fold public-affairs strategy.

3.7 Military Evaluation of Embedding in Afghanistan

When discussing the success of the embedding system as it unfolded in OEF, it is possible to identify a clear gap between the perceptions of the military versus those of the media and embedded press journalists. In *The Media and the War on Terrorism*, Stephen Hess argues that the Pentagon was happy with the way the operation was covered. When asked how well she thought the press had covered the war three months into it, Victoria Clarke replied: "In general, I think the press has done an extraordinarily good job of covering a very difficult, very unconventional war" and "[t]hey [the journalists] take a shot at us when we deserve it. Then I think that there have been some in particular that have been extraordinarily intrepid in how they've gone about covering it."[84] Similarly, Melanie R. Reeder, a U.S. Army Public Affairs Officer at the rank of Colonel, stated in an article in *Military Review* that the success experienced in embedding journalists in OA afterwards helped blaze a trail for later embedded-media programs.[85]

Although there seems to be a general understanding among military personnel that the system of embedding had worked reasonably well in OEF, the Pentagon recognized that they had not met all of the media's needs in OEF, such as early access to newsworthy information and locations.[86] Victoria Clarke even publicly apologized in a letter to the Pentagon Bureau Chiefs for the shortcomings in their preparedness to support journalists attempting to cover the war during the early stages.[87]

The military's appraisal of the embedding system can be explained by examining how the system benefitted the military. First, the hardship the ground-force soldiers encountered out on the field and their working efforts were documented and presented in a positive manner to the American public back home. Second, the military benefitted strategically in allowing journalists to embed with units. By letting journalists see for themselves what was happening on the ground, journalists could be used as "instruments" to counter propaganda issued by the Taliban. In an interview conducted by Rid, Captain Terry McCreary, the JCS Chairman's Special Assistant for Public Affairs, said that "[y]ou raid a camp, there wouldn't be any press with you, you do an operation, you leave, the enemy comes back, the press come in, and everybody tells them you murdered innocent people, you slaughtered them, and that becomes a story for the next 48 hours until you can fix it."[88] News articles written by media embeds would be much more efficient in countering false enemy propaganda than denying false accusations at official military briefings.

Chapter 4

Strategic Public-Affairs Strategy: The Iraq War and the Pentagon's *Embedded Media Program*

4.0 Executive and Military Justifications for Implementing the Embedded Media Program

Many considered the Iraq war to be a war of President Bush's own choosing.[1] On September 7 2002, President Bush announced that Saddam Hussein's top priority was to acquire nuclear power and develop weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Bush advocated that the U.S. had to stop Hussein before he acquired nuclear arms and managed to alter "the strategic balance in the oil-rich Persian Gulf War."[2]

Joseph A. Pika argues that whenever a country is engaging or plan to engage in a war, the president "must rally public support for the extraordinary effort and personal losses that will surely follow."[3] Seeking to garner support for a war "of his own choosing", President George W. Bush and his administration regarded the media as a critical actor. Negative media coverage could turn both large sections of the American people and the rest of the world against President Bush and his political objectives and goals. Although sixty-two percent of participants in a *Pew Research Center* survey supported military action in Iraq in late August 2002, the Bush administration implemented a new military public-affairs strategy, the *Embedded Media Program* (EMP) to secure public support.[4] An invasion of Iraq would alianate many allies since an invasion would mean that the Bush adminstartion broke various international agreements, for example the Kyoto Protocol on the environemnt, the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the 1996 Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.[5] The EMP was developed by Victoria Clarke, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, and was publicly announced by Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld on February 10 2003. The program was designed to dominate media coverage, counter enemy propaganda, and maintain high U.S. and international support in future military operations.[6] The program gave journalists full access to military combat units. When stationed at the frontlines journalists would be able to provide detailed coverage of military progress. And military progress would foster political capital.

When discussing why the Pentagon did not demonstrate much opposition to implementing the Bush administration's new public-affairs strategy in Iraq, Bill Katovsky quotes Michael Corleone in the movie *Godfather, Part Two:* "Keep your friends close and

your enemies closer."[7] This quote correlates to the explanation of Lieutenant Colonel Terry R. Ferrell (U.S Army). He argues that the idea of embedding journalists started within the U.S. Army. On August 1 2003, General Peter J. Schoomaker, the Army's new Chief of Staff, identified seventeen areas that had to be improved if the U.S. Army were to continue to participate in the WoT and the planned invasion of Iraq, Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF).[8] Strategic communications was identified as one of the main areas in which improvements had to be made.[9] Ferrell argues that

> This would not be strategic communications in the form of a means for talking to forces deployed around the world, but instead communications that told the Army story, intertwined with the strategic communications efforts of the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Staff.[10]

The need to tell the Army's version during OIF stemmed from the fact that the Navy, the Marines, and the Air Force were to participate only in the invasion phase of the war, while the Army would also participate in the second phase of the war, a stabilization and peacekeeping phase known as Phase IV.[11] Since the Army would spend considerably more time in Iraq, it would be given more coverage than any of the other three service branches.

The EMP ensured that media embeds would have access to information about all aspects of Army operations and military operations during OIF. By allowing its former enemy (the media) to access combat units, the military could use media coverage to its own advantage on two different counts. First, in his book, *War and Media Operations*, Thomas Rid argues that all four service branches feared that if OIF failed they would be heavily criticized on returning to the U.S. The military had become "the bad guy" after the Vietnam War, and it sought to prevent this from happening a second time. Military personnel therefore appreciated Secretary Rumsfeld's decision to implement the EMP because it would act as a vehicle to educate the U.S. public about the job the military was doing.[12] With the EMP activated, people who were reading about the war or watching news reports from Iraq would be able to say: "OK, I like this war, I hate this war, I take the choice - but I really feel that these troops are doing a damn fine job because they are doing what their country asks of them."[13] If journalists encountered soldiers in combat they would be able to separate the job that the military was doing from the actions and political decisions taken by the President.

Second, the Pentagon also hoped that the EMP would mend relations between the military and the media. In "Security at the Source: Embedding journalists as a superior strategy to military censorship", Heinz Brandenburg states that when journalists are embedded and given access to war information, this enhances their understanding and appreciation of the tactical and operational aspects of the military campaign.[14] Liz Marlantes

writes in her article, "The other boots on the ground: embedded press", that when media embeds witness the great work the military does, they will develop a greater respect for soldiers.[15] David Carr, writing for *The New York Times*, also states that when soldiers and media embeds have to share equipment and support one another out on the battlefield, friendships develop between the units and embeds.[16] Soldiers and commanding officers would also observe the dedication and professionalism of the media embeds and thus see them in a more favorable light. Chris Hanson, professor of journalism at the University of Maryland and a former Pentagon reporter, concurs with Carr. He argues in Marlantes' article that the EMP may lead to a decrease in the mutual stereotyping that has been problematic for decades.[17] As discussed earlier in chapters two and three, the media and the military represent two very different cultures. Because the two cultures are so at odds with one another, it is important that both the military and the media possess some knowledge of the other's culture. Knowledge may create understanding, and understanding may create respect.

4.1 Embedded Media Program in Operation Iraqi Freedom

When OIF was launched on March 20 2003, the EMP was activated. For the first time in American war history, the media had access to all four U.S. service branches - to the Army, Air Force, Navy and the Marines - and could report live from all combat operations. Journalists wanting to cover OIF from Iraq had to register with the Coalition Press Information Center in Kuwait. 2,870 registered, but only 558 were embedded with U.S. military ground units or at air bases. By March 20, 408 journalists had been embedded with ground units.[18] Journalists who chose not to embed were named "unilaterals".[19] Bill Katovsky and Timothy Carlson explain that to obtain a balanced view of what was happening as the war progressed, many large news organizations chose to embed journalists as well as send unilaterals to Iraq. In the aftermath of the invasion it was estimated that over 2,100 journalists had covered OIF as unilaterals.[20] They had full access to the battlefield, but not to American military combat units. They were highly discouraged by the military from entering Iraq because they or their vehicles could be misidentified as enemies, they could be kidnapped and killed by the adversary or they could be trapped between lines of fire.[21]

4.1.1 Ground Rules

While implementing EMP as the new military public-affairs strategy, Secretary Rumsfeld also issued *Public Affairs (PA) Guidance on Embedding Media During Possible Future Operations/Deployments in the U.S. Central Command Area of Responsibility* (see Appendix

D).[22] The document highly reflected the Bush administrations' desire of using the media as an actor to garner support, stating that "media coverage of any future operation will, to a large extent, shape public perception of the national security environment now and in the years ahead. This holds true for the U.S. public; the public in allied countries whose opinions can affect the durability of our coalition." The document also provided Public Affairs Officers (PAO) and Commanders with guidance and procedures for embedding the media, while media embeds were provided with detailed ground rules. Journalists who wanted to embed had to sign a contract with the Pentagon in which they agreed to follow government regulations and ground rules.[23]

The rules may seem reasonable. The Pentagon decided which units would receive media embeds, the Commanders of the units chose how many media embeds their units would receive, while the news organizations were responsible for selecting which journalists were to embed. Media embeds would have long-term and minimally restricted access to U.S. air, ground and naval forces, but any violations of the ground rules would result in immediate disembedding. Geraldo Riviera was one of approximately twenty-four journalists who were disembedded after breaking such rules, as he had outlined in the sand his unit's movements and locations while reporting live.[24] Media embeds were allowed to confirm casualties, release information and the locations of military targets that had been under attack, but they could not report on the specific numbers of troops in units below corps level, or release information regarding future operations. Media embeds were only subject to military censorship when they reported on specific matters such as troop movements, battle preparations and material capabilities, and all interviews with military personnel would be on the record. [25]

4.1.2 Media Boot Camp

In the weeks prior to OIF, the Pentagon organized boot camps for journalists wishing to embed. Journalists who opted to attend boot camp had two choices. First, they could attend a week-long boot camp on the continental U.S. prior to departure. In his research paper, *Embedding Success into the Military-Media Relationship*, Commander Jose L. Rodriguez (U.S. Naval Reserve) writes that the boot camps were held at four different locations in the United States: at Fort Benning in Georgia, Fort Dix in New Jersey, and at Quantico Marine Corp Base and Norfolk Naval Station in Virginia.[26] Attendance was not mandatory, but many journalists chose to sign up because they hoped that participation would improve their chances of being embedded.[27] Rodriguez cites Alicia C. Shepard in stating that the boot

camps "weeded out those who mistakenly thought that covering a war would be a heck of an adventure. After barely surviving pretended war, some opted to not experience the real thing."[28] The U.S. boot camps thus served as a tool for separating the journalists who were mentally and physically fit to cover OIF from those who were not.

The survey *Assessment of the Media Embedding Program,* conducted by the *Institute for Defense Analyses,* states that before the boot camps were activated, the Pentagon judged that the camps would benefit the military as well as the media because they were based on the philosophy of "train as you fight."[29] If media embeds acquired a knowledge of basic warfare, it would be much easier to assimilate them into combat units as well as make them less dependent on the soldiers.[30] Journalists were therefore familiarized with different situations they might encounter in Iraq: they learned basic safety awareness, and how to react if they were taken captive by the enemy or if they were exposed to nuclear, biological, or chemical attacks. They also learned to handle direct fire, minefields, and learned the fundamentals of cruise missiles.[31] *Assessment of the Media Embedded Program* also argues that journalists socializing with their units before departure would be able to observe deployment preparations and thus acquire a greater and more comprehensive understanding of what kinds of lives commanders and soldiers live.[32]

From early November 2002, journalists could also attend military exercises and simulations in desert terrain in Iraq's neighboring countries. Between December and January, more than eighty-five journalists trained with their military units for three to five days.[33] In an interview with Thomas Rid, Colonel Thomas, Chief Spokesperson for the Combined Force Land Component Command[34], stated that the joint military exercises emerged as very useful for both media embeds and military units. First, soldiers became used to having journalists constantly around them and media embeds learned what it meant to operate in a desert environment with the use of state-of-the-art technological equipment. This phase of accustomization made it easier to build a relationship based on trust and cooperation.[35] Second, the joint exercises also helped to overcome logistical problems. By analyzing the number of journalists who attended the joint exercises, the military could estimate, for example, how many journalists would need protective masks and suits against chemical and biological weapons out on the battlefield. If the military did not have enough masks and suits to equip the journalists, they could not be embedded due to security reasons.[36] Mike Birmingham, Chief Public Affairs Officer for the U.S. Army's 3rd Infantry Division, mentions in Rid's book that when training, the U.S. Army's 3rd Infantry Division decided that despite

paragraph 2CI of the PAG stating that media embeds had to drive with their units, the embeds drove in separate Humvees because this would produce better pictures and sound.[37]

4.2 Offensive Public-Affairs Strategy in OIF: Media Embeds as Force Multipliers

In addition to using the EMP as a device to separate political decisions from military operations and improve relations between the military and the media, embedded journalists also became part of the military's operational war strategy in OIF. American war strategy is highly influenced by the military historian and strategist Carl Von Clausewitz's theories of warfare. Thomas Rid argues that this became especially apparent during OIF.[38] He explains that Clausewitz had a psychological approach to warfare: to him, war operations should not concentrate on destroying the enemy's forces and cities; instead, war is to be regarded as an instrument that can be used to compel the enemy to carry out desired actions.[39] To compel the adversary, one must locate the adversary's "center of gravity".[40] According to Rid, this approach is replicated in one of the DoD's highest-order joint doctrines, the *Doctrine for Joint Operations* (JP 3-0). Rid uses the official *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated* to explain what a "center of gravity" means. This dictionary defines a center of gravity as "those characteristics, capabilities, or sources of power from which a military force derives its freedom of action, physical strength, or will to fight."[41]

As shown in chapter three, technological advances have greatly changed the way in which the media cover a war. For example, new satellite-phone technology meant that the media could report directly from the battlefield without any assistance from the military. During OIF, the military took advantage of the media's ability to report independently. Rid argues that in order to reach the mission's operational objective, i.e. forcing Hussein to surrender, the military incorporated the media into its offensive public-affairs strategy.[42] Both JP 3-0, and the Army's public-affairs field manual on tactics, techniques and procedures, FM 3-61.1, states that the press and its reporting can be deliberately used to communicate messages to the enemy.[43] In addition, FM 3-61.1 is the first public-affairs manual stating that public affairs could and should be used offensively.[44] *The New York Times* article, "Little Resistance Encountered as Troops Reach Baghdad", serves as example of the way in which media embeds can be used as instruments to transmit information to the adversary. The article informed Hussein that his army had been severely weakened, and that the remnants of one of his Republican Guard division had been destroyed by U.S. Marines.[45] When the media report words and images that describe U.S. military capabilities and strength, the adversary may be scared into not taking certain actions because he fears the consequences. When media embeds

are present at major battles, they publish information which reveals, for example, how many U.S. soldiers are engaged in the operation, what kinds of weapons are used and which parts of Iraq the U.S. controls.[46] On April 15 2003, *The New York Times* published an article headlined "Military; Pentagon Asserts the Main Fighting is Finished in Iraq". The article reported that

> As part of the ongoing operations to secure the country, military officials said today that the Fourth Infantry Division, which has the Army's most advanced Abrams tanks, would be assigned control over northern Iraq. The Third Armored Cavalry Regiment, a force that includes tanks, attack helicopters and reconnaissance helicopters, will be assigned to protect the western flanks.[47]

If Hussein or the supporters of his regime read or learned about the contents of the article, about the strength of the army they were fighting, their fighting spirit might be weakened and the mission of the U.S. forces might be eased. The embedded media thus served as a force multiplier.

4.3 Defensive Public-Affairs Strategy in OIF: Media Embeds as a Tool of Persuasion

Incorporated into Clausewitz's center-of-gravity theory is the idea that military and political spheres cannot be viewed in isolation because the two spheres have an impact on one another in a war. Clausewitz calls the relationship that exists between the people, their government and their military the "remarkable trinity", and he views the media as the connective factor in this trinity.[48] Each segment of the trinity is critical to a military operation's success.[49] Subsequently, Rid argues that the media forms part of Washington's decision-making process because they act as the Fourth Estate and inform the people about the war's progress, successes, and mishaps.[50] Robin Brown's interpretation of this theory is that military activity can only be considered a narrow contributing factor in a more complex picture dominated by the much broader political perspective.[51] Brown argues that since the U.S. government is elected by the people, public support is necessary if a government seeks to enter into a war over an extensive period of time. If the public does not support a government-sponsored military intervention, usage of military power abroad will be severely limited in a democratic country.[52] This was illustrated in the later stages of the Vietnam War during which the people's protests forced the Nixon administration to eventually withdraw from South Vietnam. Because it is the public that decides whether or not their country is to engage in a war, the American people can be identified as America's own center of gravity in OIF.

The EMP helped to protect the American center of gravity in OIF on three different counts. Because the media influence people's opinions about and perceptions of a war, it was

imperative that the media had access to U.S. combat units. Many consider OIF an illegitimate invasion because the U.S. and the "coalition of the willing"[53] invaded Iraq on false premises. Prior to the invasion, many questioned the Bush administration's claims that Iraq had nearly developed a nuclear program and that Iraq had links to Al Qaeda. Due to the controversial nature of the invasion, from a political perspective it was even more critical that the media write favorably about the invasion. Robin Brown argues that if the media had been prevented from accessing information or were subject to military censorship, they might start speculating about the war and its progress. Speculation about and incorrect assessments of the war could shape people's and politicians' attitudes to a war counter-productively: "Given that the modern political class is highly sensitive to media commentary, there is recognition that shaping how war is presented and analyzed is an inescapable requirement."[54]

Second, the EMP also sought to shield the American people from enemy propaganda. Rid explains that many inside the Pentagon believed that the adversaries of the U.S. were becoming much better at producing war propaganda targeting the U.S. public. Since the American media can be used to transmit propaganda, it is important to give the media the opportunity to assess for themselves the state of affairs. Rid cites B. Whitman's *The Birth of Embedding as a Pentagon War Policy*, in which Whitman argues that the Pentagon's media operators hoped that media embeds would act as credible and objective observers who would inform people about the progress of the war.[55] If no journalists witnessed battles or informed the American people of the outcomes, Iraqi propaganda would have to be contested solely by the American military. If the military addressed Iraqi propaganda, this would mean that Iraqi and American statements would contrast with one another and people would thus have to judge for themselves whom to believe and support.[56] The DoD's *Joint Information Operations doctrine* (JP 3-13) spells out that "public affairs is the first-line defense against the adversary's propaganda and disinformation", and that public affairs helps to defeat the enemy's effort to diminish the nation's will and morale.[57]

Anthony R. DiMaggio[58] and Raymundo Villarreal Jr. concur with Rid in that adversaries can take advantage of the media's influencing power: "It seemed certain that the US must not allow Saddam's information minister, known as 'Bagdad Bob,' to get the better of the media at a crucial period where world opinion would be critical."[59] Paul and Kim cite Victoria Clarke as an example in arguing that the American media have significant power to influence public opinion. Victoria Clarke advocates that it has been important to let people see for themselves what was happening in Iraq through the news media. Because the media have developed a tradition of not trusting the military it is, according to Clarke, more fruitful to

have media embeds educating the people about the progress of a war war, rather than let military officers present assessments of an operation at military briefings.[60] Credibility guarantees that a message has momentum.[61]

Third, Bill Katovsky, Scott Althaus, Kevin Coe, and Carolyn A. Lin argue that the EMP would enhance Americans' group identity and support for the war. Bill Katovsky claims that when journalists were allowed to cover the invasion independently, the EMP demonstrated that the U.S. favored democratic values such as freedom of speech. Freedom of speech contrasted with the Bush administration's characterization of Hussein, "the dark tyranny and disinformation of Saddam's government."[62] If Americans witnessed U.S. soldiers fighting for America and her values and beliefs, a feeling of common identity would be produced. A strong group identity would again produce patriotism and support for the war. Althaus and Coe writes that group identities create patriotism because people

> Think of themselves first and foremost as members of the in-group—that is, as Americans. Consequently, when asked to formulate opinions about the war, citizens may tend to offer support because they see support as consistent with the needs of the group.[63]

When people are exposed to media coverage highlighting American participation and successes, Lin argues, a "manufactured consent" is created. This consent will help "advance elite capitalistic economic interests—on weighty issues of foreign policy such as war."[64] Althaus and Coe also stress that if media coverage decreases, many people will find it difficult to feel personally connected to the soldiers. People will then judge the war independently, resulting in a decline in support for the war.[65]

A steady decrease in media embeds in Iraq between March and June 2003 supports Althaus and Coe's claim. On March 20, 408 journalists were embedded. Dooley cites two surveys that were conducted by FOX News/Opinion Dynamics Poll. The first survey was conducted on March 25-26. Respondents were asked to rate how well they thought the war was progressing. Thirty-seven percent of those polled believed that the war was going "very well", forty-six percent believed that it was going "quite well", nine percent answered "not very well", two percent said "not at all well" while six percent were "not sure".[66] On April 21-22 2003, respondents were once again asked to rate how the war was going. Eleven percent believed that the war was going "very well", thirty-one percent said "quite well", twenty-eight percent said "not very well", twenty-seven percent answered "not at all well" and three percent were "not sure".[67] This decrease demonstrated by the surveys in the war's rate of favorability is consistent with the overall decrease in media embeds. For example, on March

20, 101 journalists were embedded with navy units, on April 9 only twenty-seven were still embedded, while the last embed left Iraq on April 16.[68]

On May 1 2003, President Bush visited the U.S. aircraft carrier *USS Abraham Lincoln*.[69] While onboard he gave a speech saying that "major combat operations in Iraq have ended. In the battle of Iraq, the United States and our allies have prevailed."[70] By May 2, the number of embeds had decreased to 108 and by June 6 only nineteen journalists were still embedded.[71] Having journalists embedded for an extensive period of time is expensive and many news bureaus could not afford to have journalists in Iraq when the number and the newsworthiness of the battles decreased. Ferrell and Dooley argue that when media embeds retreated from Iraq, a great void was left in the news coverage of the continuing OIF.[72] Due to media embeds leaving their units, the Pentagon lost a "critical piece of its information operations campaign."[73]

4.4 Criticism of the EMP

When the invasion phase was over, many sought to evaluate whether the EMP had benefitted the media, the military, as well as the American people and their craving for information about OIF. There has been extensive debate concerning what type of coverage the media embeds produced and whether the coverage deprived the American people of the total picture of the war.

Most critics of the EMP share the same concern: that the program severely limited the way media embeds covered OIF. Their arguments center on the terms "in bed" and "Stockholm Syndrome"[74]. Raymundo Villarreal Jr. provides a very good explanation why these terms have been applied by critics. He writes that the premise behind these two terms is that when a journalist is constantly interacting with the soldiers in his/her unit, as well as having to rely on the military for food, protection, shelter, and acceptance, the journalist loses his or her journalistic impartiality and can no longer function as a "Fourth Estate".[75] Andrew Lindner explains that the term "Stockholm Syndrome" has been used largely to describe the way in which journalists adopt a military identity and consider themselves one of "a band of brothers."[76]

In an interview with Barbra Bedway, Chris Hedges, a veteran reporter, argues that the EMP made the war easier to see, but harder to understand. When journalists are embedded with military units, they see the war through military eyes. The result, according to Hedges, is that embedded news reports become distorted and very biased.[77] Judith Sylvester and Suzanne Huffman confirm Hedges' claim in arguing in *Reporting from the Front* that a majority of the

media embeds that they had talked to during their study said that they had found it difficult to maintain their journalistic objectivity.[78] Similarly, *Orange County Register* columnist Gordon Dillow says that when he was embedded with Alpha Company, First Battalion, 5th Marine regiment, he could not look anybody in the eye and claim that he was being completely objective. While arguing that he does not understand that anyone can claim that he or she were writing objectively, he also states that it is not really the media embeds' job to be objective: it is the task of editors to ensure that media embeds' news reports are presented in an objective setting.[79]

Journalists Morley Safer and Andy Rooney are also concerned about the lack of objectivity that they believed the EMP produced. Lieutenant Colonel Oehl cites Peter Johnson's article, "Reporters Go Along With Military Upbeat Stories Play Well At Home, But Critics See Skewed View of War." In Johnson's article, Andy Rooney states that "It's very difficult to write anything critical about a guy you're going to have breakfast with the next morning."[80] Similarly, journalist Robert Jensen, quoted in Colonel Glenn T. Starnes' strategy research paper *Leveraging the Media: The Embedded Media Program in Operation Iraqi Freedom*, argues that media embeds identified too closely with their units. He believes that the EMP prevented media embeds from telling the whole story because the program authorized the military to control their movements.[81]

In *Embedded: Weapons of Mass Deception*, Danny Schechter fiercely argues that the embed program has compromised people's right to know. He argues that in Iraq there was a high-powered media campaign aiming only at promoting the war on Iraq and seeking to shape the views of the American people. The EMP, according to him, relied on a media-savvy political strategy to sell the administration's priorities and policies: "There is an intimate link between the media, the war and the Bush Administration that even many activists are unaware of."[82]

Raymundo Villarreal Jr. points out that many of the critics who argue that embeds are "in bed" with the military, also used the catchphrase "soda straw" when describing what kinds of news the media embeds produced. "Soda-straw" news is described in Villarreal's thesis as news reports that were high in visual appeal and dramatic detail, but which lacked context, perspective or scrutiny. When news reports were interpreted at the various news desks, it was difficult to place the news into the wider context of the operation because media embeds reported only on slices of the war.[83] Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld was aware of this problem and cautioned that an embed's view could not be regarded as the complete picture of the war.[84] During the first week of the invasion, he addressed the issue of the embedded news

reports and publicly announced that the media's mood swings as well as their reporting could be regarded as somewhat disorienting because they did not reflect the wider picture.[85]

Both right-wing and left-wing advocates were concerned about what kind of reporting the EMP produced. Twelve Republican congressmen voiced their concerns about the media embeds' "inappropriate" questions that could reduce the military's fighting spirit: in a letter they asked Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld to explain why he had not imposed censorship. A liberal group, *Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting*, argues that because embeds focused only on their own units, no one was presenting the administration with tough questions about Iraqi civilian casualties as well as the motives for invading Iraq.[86]

4.5 Evaluation of the EMP by Press Embeds

Andrew Jacobs from *The New York Times* spent five days at one of Pentagon's media boot camps.[87] For him the stay there was "alternately enlightening, entertaining, horrifying and physically exhausting." In an article, Jacobs states that he quickly became aware of the Pentagon's underlying motivation for inviting journalists to the boot camps and the implementation of the EMP.

First, Jacobs learned how to react and behave when covering a war because media embeds could not become a burden to the units to which they were attached. In his own words: "nothing impeded victory like a bleeding reporter." Second, Jacobs also contends that journalists who attended the boot camps could lose their objectivity while embedded:

> All that marching, commiserating and drinking with the Marines makes for warm and fuzzy feelings on both sides. By the end of the training, seen-it-all reporters were raving about military rations and the on-the-record interaction with commanders and lieutenants, who turned out to be genial hosts.[88]

To Jacobs it became obvious that the close relationship that the boot camps and EMP fostered would help the Pentagon to send out positive stories about the military and the war effort.

Michael Gordon, chief military correspondent for *The New York Times*, and Peter Baker, a *Washington Post* media embed, argue that Jacobs' assertion that one lost one's objectivity did not occur. Gordon was embedded with the Land War Command in Iraq. In an interview with Paul McLeary, he argues that the EMP can be considered a success and he does not agree with critics of the program. He admits that there have been incidents of embeds using pronouns such as "we" and "us" when reporting on the unit they were attached to, but these are exceptions rather than a general pattern.[89] Baker argues that when filing news, most serious news journalists will and should consciously block out the relationship they have developed with their unit because they should know that if they do not, they will not be able

to produce objective news reports.[90] The EMP simply enables journalists to get closer to their sources, something every journalist seeks to do "whether it's a campaign correspondent drinking with political consultants in the hotel bar in Manchester, New Hampshire, or a crime reporter hanging out at the precinct house with the cops." Further, he thinks it ludicrous that people, and especially journalists, argue that the EMP jeopardized true news reporting, "We beg, and beg and beg for years to get access. Then we finally get it and we go, 'Oh, this is a bad thing!' How is that bad? There's nothing bad about it. All it means is that we have to take our responsibilities more seriously."[91]

Gordon and Baker's argumentation gains legitimacy when looking at two empirical example from the field. While out with his unit, William Branigin of the *Washington Post* learned that a part of his unit, the U.S. 3rd Infantry Division, which was stationed some distance from him, had detected an unidentified vehicle approaching them at full speed. Due to the threat of suicide bombers, units were not allowed to go near unidentified vehicles or let any vehicles come near them. The platoon leader had not paid attention to his surroundings and did not have enough time to fire any warning shots before directly targeting the fast-approaching vehicle. After firing five or six rounds at the vehicle itself, it was discovered that the vehicle was packed with Iraqi civilians. The platoon leader who had fired the deadly shots was a twenty-three year old lieutenant. Branigin felt deeply sorry for him because he had to carry the burden of having killed innocent civilians for the rest of his life. Branigin reported the incident to the *Washington Post,* but the Pentagon had already published a version which differed greatly from his.[92] An U.S. military spokesman stated that seven civilians had been killed in the incident and that the unit had fired warning shots at the vehicle, but these were ignored.[93] When Branigin returned to the scene he found ten dead on the spot and was told that the eleventh had died from injuries at an American field hospital. Apparently, the Pentagon's initial, lower figures came from the platoon leader before the bodies had been removed from the vehicle. Branigin refused to change his story.[94]

Second, in his book *In the Company of Soldiers,* Rick Atkinson, a *Washington Post* journalist embeded with 101 Airborn Divison, recalles an episode where *New York Times* embed Jim Dwyer's article about Major General David H. Petraeus, commander of the 101st Airborne Division, caused much fury. Dwyer's article portrayled Major General Petraeus as being eager to win the war singlehandedly, and the article were not friendly greeted by Petraeus.[95] Branigin's and Dwyer's stories serve as a counterclaim to critics' denunciation of the EMP as a tool for producing biased news reports. If media embeds were "in bed" with their units, Branigin would, for example, have succumbed to the information that the

Pentagon released about the incident. Despite the fact that he sympathized with the lieutenant who had fired the deadly shots, and knew that his story would place his unit in a bad light, and that it would compromise his relationship with the unit's commander, he refused to change his story. By adhering to what he had observed, Branigin and his report stand as an example of the way in which journalists managed to write objective and professional news reports despite being embedded.

4.6 Military Evaluation of the EMP

The EMP was deemed a success by the military. In his research project, *Army Cultural Change and Effective Media Relations*, Colonel Daniel L. Baggio (U.S. Army) concludes that the EMP will and should remain a cornerstone of the military's public-affairs strategy.[96] Brian Whitman, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, concurs. He argues that media embeds have done a phenomenal job covering the invasion phase from their very unique perspective.[97] He also stated that an important lesson learned from the EMP was that the military and media can work together in a fashion allowing both parties to accomplish their professional goals.[98]

In an interview with *Columbia Journalism Review*, Lieutenant Larry Cox, the Pentagon's press Desk Chief, responded to the "soda-straw" criticism voiced by many critics. He argued that if the EMP had been responsible for all of the news coverage, it would not have been a success because the news would be so one-dimensional. But the American public were not deprived of the complete war picture because the media embeds' narrow and direct reporting was balanced by stories published by unilaterals.[99] When questioned about the media embeds' reporting, one anonymous commander stated in *Assessment of the DoD Embedded Media Program* that embeds' reports were generally accurate and fair and he did not know of any report that had been biased because of the embed's relationship with his or her unit.[100] Likewise, PAO Colonel Guy Shields (U.S Army) claims that if anyone believes that media embeds cannot report objectively, this would be just like saying that a soldier who is trained to kill cannot be a peacekeeper. Disciplined soldiers can do anything professionally, and journalists can bond with their units and still do their jobs professionally.[101]

General Tommy Franks states that he is a big fan of the EMP and deems it a success. To him, the EMP's success indicates that the U.S. has taken a step forward to fully implementing the First Amendment in practice. If people are to be informed about what their military is engaged in, it is necessary to have journalists at the frontlines because this is where battles are fought.[102] General Richard Mayer also argues that because the U.S. public were

provided with a close-up view of the military units and their accomplishments, the EMP helped to eliminate some of the cynicism towards the U.S. military that had previously existed within the media environment.[103]

Colonel Guy Shield and PAO Sergeant Major Carol Sobel argue that the EMP reduced the workload of PAOs.[104] When unilaterals were caught in crossfire they called American PAOs and demanded that they come and rescue them:

> The first time anything goes wrong they call us and say "Come save me." And we get some of them back. Then the second night - the same damn thing - and some of the same damn people." "Come help us," they begged. I said, "I just talked to you last night!" They would go, "We-hu, we thought it would be safer today." I responded, "Are you people crazy? No story is worth dying for!" After the second night, I said no more.[105]

If the EMP had not been activated and journalists had been placed in pools, many journalists would probably have covered the invasion independently due to the negative experiences linked to the use of pools in the past. If most journalists had chosen to cover the war independently, the PAOs would have been occupied with assisting journalists out in the field. The EMP ensured that 408 journalists did not need assistance from military PAOs.

Even though the EMP was deemed a success by both military units and the Pentagon, there were incidents of media embeds and their reporting becoming a liability for the military. First, ground rule 4.A states that all interviews with service members will be on the record, meaning everything soldiers say to journalists is eligible for publication. Raymundo Villarreal Jr. cites an article written by embedded *New York Times* journalist Dexter Filkins on March 29 2003.[106] In Filkins's article, "Either Take a Shot or Take a Chance", Marine sharpshooter, Sergeant Eric Schrumpf, explains how Iraqi insurgents often used women and children as human shields when firing at American soldiers and how difficult it was to assess whether or not to shoot back when Marine lives and security are at stake: "In the heat of a firefight a shot not taken in one set of circumstances may suddenly present itself as a life-or-death necessity". Schrumpf recalls an incident in which an Iraqi woman was shot because she was standing near an Iraqi soldier. "I'm sorry, but the chick was in the way", Schrumpf told Filkins.[107] The military was greatly criticized by both the American and the international press.[108]

Second, Colonel Glenn T. Starnes (U.S. Marine Corps) and Colonel Daniel L. Baggio (U.S. Army) both argue that problems occur when media embeds' news reports reach the news desks back home in the United States. Colonel Starnes cites Rachel Smolkin's *Media Mood Swings*. She explains that when the Pentagon fails to place embedded news reports into a larger strategic context, it is often up to unqualified people at news desks to interpret the information. If the EMP is to be activated in future military operations, Smolkin argues, it is

imperative that the Pentagon develop a system that places news reports into the correct strategic context.[109] Colonel D. Baggio recalls an incident in which a media embed's news report was interpreted out of context. The following took place in Fallujah on November 13 2004:

> A Marine shot an apparently helpless Iraqi insurgent in a building while a NBC television crew recorded it. There was more to the story. It turns out that these same Marines encountered similar situations the day before, evidenced by the following: "Some of the tactics said to be used by the insurgents included playing dead and attacking, surrendering and attacking, and rigging dead or wounded with bombs. In the November 13th incident, the US Marine apparently believed the insurgent was playing dead." There was justification in the eyes of the U.S. Marines, who redeemed the young Marine in the end, as he was determined innocent. But the damage was done, leaving an indelible stain. Television, radio, newspapers and magazines around the world carried the story in an unfavourable perspective […] The consequence was that countless positive accomplishments were negated by one regrettable now-public event that was not readily explained.[110]

To prevent similar incidents in future military operations, he argues that the media should receive pre-operational briefings and explanations of specific tactics, techniques and procedures used when clearing buildings. He is not suggesting that the military should suppress or censor the media, but instead help them to understanding the context of an action.[111]

4.6.1 After-Action Reports and Lessons Learned

Military after-action and lessons-learned reports also deemed the EMP a success. Rid argues that such military unanimity in praise of military-media relations is unprecedented in recent American history.[112] In May 2003, the U.S. 1st Marine Division filed its report entitled *Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) Lessons Learned*.[113] The report concludes that the EMP can be considered a success on three different counts. First, media embeds reduced the Iraqis' ability to conduct a successful propaganda campaign. While having unprecedented access to the battlefield, the media embeds had been able to document the Fedayeen's[114] disregard of the Laws of War[115] and the Geneva Convention.[116]

Second, the EMP enhanced relations between the media and the Marines. After having personally experienced what being a soldier in a war meant,, media embeds exercised much more caution when reporting on wounded and killed U.S. soldiers. Being embedded also implied that journalists had the opportunity to clarify their understanding of an event with soldiers and commanders before releasing the story. Because soldiers and journalists were constantly interacting with each other, a bond of trust developed which led to soldiers in news reports being presented in a much more personal and humanistic way than earlier: "To the

viewers and readers, the 1st Marine Division was not an anonymous killing machine, it was an 18 year-old Marine from Anywhere, USA."[117]

Third, media embeds served as links between soldiers and their loved ones. By reading news articles and watching reports made by media embeds, soldiers' families were updated daily. In addition, soldiers used the journalists' equipment to communicate with their families back home. According to the report, this culminated in better morale among both Marines and their families.

On page 35 in the lessons learned report it is stated that news reports written by embeds were highly influenced by the kinds of accomplishments the 1st Division's units achieved. Because the 1st Division's units had attained all their pre-set goals, the units were given favorable news coverage. But the report questioned what type of coverage the units would have received if the Coalition had lost a battalion in a chemical attack. It states that

> we need to pause and remember that we were both good and lucky. We achieved victory quickly and we were successful in keeping our casualties low. We took great pains to limit collateral damage and this paid off in the court of public opinion.[118]

Because future military operations might not be equally successful, the report states that it is important to remember that the media had on several occasions jumped on "the bandwagon of doom and gloom", and would probably do so again.[119] Because future military operations will face different media environments, the 1st Division argues that embedding media in OIF can be considered only a limited success and that EMP should not be implemented as a standard procedure. A thorough risk/benefit analysis would be needed before embedding the media in future combat operations.[120] That even the 1st Division of the Marines, a fraction of a branch that is famous for its open public-affairs strategy, advocates a risk/benefit analysis may lead one to assume that future military operations will probably continue to experience a clash between the cultures of the media and the military.

An *After Action Report Operation Iraqi Freedom* was released by the Third Infantry Division (Mechanized) in July 2003. First, the report highlights two points justifying why joint training before departure should be the norm in future operations. The first point said that such joint training helped both the military and the media to develop TTPs that would work as well as possible in the field.[121] Joint exercises also improved military-media relations. Both commanders and soldiers felt more at ease after spending time with media embeds before the launch date of operations. Being comfortable around media embeds resulted in the military having more trust in journalists.[122] Due to this positive experience, the report argues

that, in future military operations, the embed program should be activated as early as possible to build a trusting relationship.[123]

Second, embeds acquired a realistic understanding of combat operations. They were also more optimistic in their reporting than were unilaterals who attended only briefings at the Pentagon, at CENTCOM in Qatar or at the Coalition Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) in Kuwait. Coverage of a scheduled pause during a sandstorm near An Najaf illustrates how important it was for the Third Infantry Division to have media embeds attached to its units. The unit 3ID grasped the opportunity to refit and refuel while the sandstorm was at its most extreme. Unilaterals were not aware that the sandstorm made it impossible for the unit to proceed with their scheduled plan, and started to suggest that the military was in a "quagmire", and that the invasion plan was flawed because the unit had retreated. In reality, this pause had in fact been just that - a pause. Media embeds countered this negative assessment in their news report.[124]

4.7 Content Analyse of Print-News Articles

At the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association in Montreal, Canada, Andrew Lindner presented his paper *Among the Troops: Seeing the Iraq War Through Three Journalistic Vantage Points*, the first systematic documentation of the substantive content of the news coverage during OIF. Lindner conducted a content analysis of 742 print news articles written by 156 journalists from the major combat period of the war. The articles were divided into three categories based on what type of journalist had written them: media embeds, unilateral journalists and journalists who had reported only from Baghdad.

First, the content analysis revealed that ninety-three percent of articles written by media embeds had soldiers as their main sources, compared to 42.8 percent of unilateral articles and 24.4 percent of articles written by journalists based in Baghdad. This is hardly surprising as media embeds spent most of their time with military units. Second, thirty-seven percent of all articles written by media embeds were what one might call human-interest stories, focusing on soldiers' experiences, biographies and feelings. Only 1.4 percent of unilateral articles focused on this topic while no journalists based in Baghdad covered it. Third, unilaterals and journalists based in Baghdad were much more adept at reporting on bombings than embeds. 45.7 percent of articles written by reporters stationed in Baghdad and 41.4 percent of unilateral coverage covered bombing, while only 22.6 percent of media embeds covered the issue. Fourth, 49.6 percent of articles written by journalists based in Baghdad mentioned civilian casualties while 29.7 percent of unilateral coverage and 11.5

percent of coverage by media embeds mentioned the same topic. Lindner explains that the percentages concerning this topic are so diverging because seventy-five percent of articles written by unilaterals and journalists in Baghdad used civilians as sources, while only 22.3 percent of the media embeds used civilians as sources. Fifth, articles covering Iraqi human-interest stories appeared in 43.4 percent of unilateral and Baghdad-based articles, while only 8.5 percent of media embeds wrote about them. Sixth, only 11.5 percent of articles written by embeds mention any of the at least 2,100 civilian deaths (as of August 11, 2006), while thirty percent of unilaterals and nearly fifty percent of Baghdad-based articles mention this.

Lindner's content analysis clearly reveals that media embeds were much more likely to report on issues that only affected their own units and they did not pay much attention to other topics such as civilian casualties or culture-related issues. It is also revealed that people who read only news articles written by media embeds were not presented with the whole picture of the war. Critics who argue that media embeds were in fact "in bed" with the units thus seem to support Lindner findings. But, as Linder concludes, one cannot blame media embeds for covering only small fractions of OIF because the EMP is designed to maximize the media embeds' interaction with the units. Likewise, EMP minimizes the media embeds' opportunity to see what is happening at places other than where they are stationed.[125]

4.8 Pew Research Center: Working Conditions and Public Opinion

The *Project for Excellence in Journalism* (PEJ) is a non-partisan and non-political project, and one of eight projects that make up the *Pew Research Center* in Washington D.C. From September 28 to November 7 2007, the PEJ conducted a survey whose main goal was to get a sense of the conditions that journalists faced when covering the Iraq war between 2003 and 2007. 111 journalists from twenty-nine different news organizations (including newspapers, wire services, magazines, radio, and network and cable television) took part in the survey. More than eighty-five percent of those who took part had at some point embedded with U.S. troops: all responses were anonymous.

Participants were asked to rate what kinds of advantages and limitations the EMP had imposed on media embeds. Sixty percent of the participants believed that the EMP had provided them with an advantage to access places and meet military personnel that they would not have had if they had covered the invasion as unilaterals. Twenty-five percent also answered that the EMP had enhanced journalists' insight into U.S. troops and what kind of lives soldiers live. When discussing what kinds of limitations the EMP created, thirty percent believed that the U.S. military could restrict journalists' access. The survey does not explain

why the thirty percent who stated this believed that the U.S. could impose restrictions. Fourteen percent stated that the EMP had prevented them from writing news reports about civilian Iraqis.

That some media embeds found it problematic to engage with Iraqi civilians is reconfirmed by the participants who were asked to rate the topic that had been given the poorest coverage. Sixty-two percent answered that ordinary Iraqis had received too little coverage. When asked what topic they felt had been given the best coverage, an overwhelming majority of eighty-two percent placed the reporting of American units at the top. A majority of the participants do not agree with critics' claims of biased news reports by media embeds. Seventy percent answered that they believed embedded media coverage produced an accurate picture of what was happening in Iraq. Only fifteen percent believed that media embeds made the situation look better than it was. [126]

The PEJ survey cites a second survey by the Pew Research Center. a public-opinion survey conducted on August 24-27 2007. Question five in the survey asked: "In general, do you think news reports are making the situation in Iraq seem worse than it really is or better than it really is, or are reports showing the situation about the way it really is?" In October 2003, thirty-eight percent believed that the news reports made OIF look worse, fourteen percent thought that they made it look better, thirty-six percent believed that the war was presented accurately, and twelve percent did not know.

4.9 The Institute for Defense Analyses: Military-Media Relations and News-Bureau Chiefs

One month after the fall of Baghdad, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs requested that the Institute for Defense Analyses conduct an independent survey of the EMP. The survey, *Assessment of the DoD Embedded Media Program*, found that embeds were generally very impressed with the quality, professionalism, and dedication of the military units. Being embedded with a unit for a longish period of time had increased their respect for the members of the unit and the military as a profession.[127]

Due to past experiences with the military, many news-bureau chiefs had initially been sceptical of the program. Bureau chiefs were worried that their journalists would lose their objectivity or that military commanders would try to manipulate and control what kind of coverage their units were given.[128] However, after the invasion phase had been completed, most bureau chiefs were very pleased with the coverage that the media embeds had produced. In the survey, an anonymous bureau chief stated that "The American public had a first hand

view—good, bad, and ugly—right in their living room. They got to see the war from the perspective of so many different soldiers. There was no effort by the military to hide anything or the media to sensationalize anything—just an effort to provide the facts."[129] A second anonymous bureau chief stated that the program had not just been about the military doing the media a favor by letting them in, but it had also been good for America because American citizens have the right to see how "American dollars and blood are being expended."[130]

The preconceived notion and fear of a hostile and uncooperative military had been shattered. Compared to earlier military operations, the attitude of the Pentagon and the units had been positive, and the level of support they offered had been high. Responding to the soda-straw criticism, bureau chiefs stated that it was primarily their responsibility, and not the military's, to provide a broad view of OIF, and they had not expected media embeds to provide a complete picture of the war because they could not know anything about what was happening elsewhere in Iraq. The media embeds wrote about their specific unit and not about what happened at other locations in Iraq.[131] The Institute of Defense Analyses concluded that the trust and confidence that had developed between commanders and media embeds had been a critical factor in the EMP's success. Commanders had appreciated the media embeds' reports and contributions and had treated them as a part of their teams.[132]

One general assessment stated by the news-bureau chiefs that participated in the survey was that if EMP were activated during the next U.S. military operation, it should not be the only reporting method. It was successful because it supplemented other types of media coverage.[133]

Chapter 5

Analysis

5.0 Media Culture vs. Military Culture

A clash of cultures between the media and the military has made it difficult for them to agree upon the level of media access during military operations. The very nature of the two sets of institutions contrasts starkly. In order to carry out their jobs, the media and the military depend on different levels of openness and access.[1] Frank Aukofer explains that military commanders are trained and drilled in the area of "operational security", which is based on the premise that an adversary can analyze published information and accurately assess the U.S. military's capabilities or intentions and the locations of stationed U.S troops. Information is a key to military success: operational secrecy is necessary if operational strategy and tactics are to succeed.[2] As Rear Admiral Steven Pietropapli argues: "At the core, if it comes down to operational security or press access, you're exactly right: military officers will always choose operational security."[3]

The media does not share the military's need for operational security. To survive in a competitive business while acting as a check on the government and educating the American people about governmental actions during wartime, it is necessary for the media to have complete access to information. Almost like a law of nature, the media will always crave open access and no censorship while the military is heavily dependent on secrecy and operational security. This clash of cultures has highly influenced the media's access to the battlefield since the Vietnam War.

5.1 Military Culture Influences Public-Affairs Strategy.

The decision to implement a restrictive public-affairs strategy secured military operational strategy and security during both the Grenada Invasion and the Persian Gulf War. Although this restrictive public-affairs strategy varied in the level of journalistic access, the Grenada Invasion and the Persian Gulf War share one key feature: the nature of the operations implied that operational strategy and security would be at risk if journalists were allowed to cover the war independently. Operational security and the strategic imperative in Grenada depended on the element of surprise, so media coverage of any kind would have jeopardized the operation, compromised the invasion's initial objectives, and placed American soldiers' and commanders' lives in danger. By imposing a news blackout lasting two-and-a-half days, the

military was able to control journalists' access to military units as well as their access to the battlefield.

Technological advances led to journalists covering the Persian Gulf War being better equipped to report independently than journalists had been in 1983. The Pentagon regarded equipment such as portable satellite telephones and television sets as endangering both the operation and military personnel stationed out in the Kuwaiti desert. Indeed, electronic signals from satellite phones could be picked up by Iraqi satellites and used as intelligence. Because the Iraqi military would most likely assume that journalists were reporting from locations at which American combat units were positioned, independent media coverage would place soldiers and commanders in great danger. News coverage revealing sensitive information would also provide Hussein and his regime with valuable information that could harm the overall operation. For example, information which revealed low levels of supplies and technical difficulties would help to boost Hussein's war efforts and fighting spirit.

The procedure of allowing journalists to access the battlefield in pools allowed the military in Grenada and in the Persian Gulf War to control both the press's access to the battlefield and its level of interaction with military units. In contrast to Grenada, press pools in the Persian Gulf War facilitated a higher degree of press access to the battlefield and military personnel and thus increased the level of danger for the military, but censorship by public-affairs officers and the Joint Information Bureau in Dhahran ensured that journalists complied with *Operation Desert Shield/Ground Rules and Guidelines for News Media* and thus reduced the risk of journalists reporting on sensitive information.

An experimental public-affairs strategy secured military operational strategy and security in Bosnia and Afghanistan. Unlike restrictive public-affairs strategy, which judges media coverage to be a liability to an operation's strategy and security, this experimental public-affairs strategy turned public-affairs into an operational strategic advantage. In both the Bosnia intervention and the Afghanistan War, public-affairs strategy was implemented into the broader operational strategy. In Bosnia, press embeds and news coverage were used as instruments to pressure former enemy fractions into complying with the Dayton Peace Accord. Instead of regarding journalists as undesirable actors on the battlefield, the press was turned into a force multiplier. From a military viewpoint, embedding in Bosnia and "Ricks' Rule" demonstrate the necessity of establishing and implementing pre-set ground rules in public-affairs strategy before combat is entered into. With no pre-set ground rules, it was up to each press embed to evaluate what constituted a threat to operational strategy and security. The combination of a competitive news business and the revoking of the draft in 1973

resulted in many journalists not always being adequately competent to evaluate what constituted a threat and what did not.

Like in Bosnia, the Pentagon decided upon an untraditional public-affairs strategy in the Afghanistan War. Unlike in the Bosnia intervention, journalists covering the Afghanistan War did not help the military to reach its pre-set goals. Similar to the Grenada Invasion and the Persian Gulf War, the nature of the Afghanistan War influenced the Pentagon's choice of public-affairs strategy. Embedding journalists in the first six weeks of the war would have jeopardized the Special Forces' operations. From a military point of view, the Coalition Information Centers, operating twenty-four hours a day, served as a successful counterpropaganda instrument. The centers' reactive and proactive approach prevented the Taliban's propaganda from spreading to civilian Afghans. If Taliban propaganda reached civilian Afghans, more people might join the Taliban and thus make the operation more difficult and more dangerous for the U.S. military. Pre-stated ground rules for press embeds in Afghanistan secured operational security to a much greater degree than "Ricks' Rule" had in Bosnia.

Strategic public-affairs strategy in the invasion phase of the Iraq War, in the form of the *Embedded Media Program (*EMP), turned press embeds into potential threats to both operational security and the security of units because press embeds had access to classified information. In Iraq, journalists participating in the EMP were not subject to military censorship, and they could easily report on topics which public affairs officers would regard as too sensitive to be published. Indeed, there were several incidents of journalists reporting live who accidentally revealed their unit's position or future plans. Like in the Persian Gulf War, the Hussein regime anno 2003 could again use American media coverage as intelligence sources and subsequently be able to eradicate American units by plotting in the units' location coordinates into missile computers. But the risk of embeds revealing dangerous information was very low because when journalists were attached to their units day-and-night for months at a time, they would also be placed in harm's way if they reported on sensitive information such as their unit's location. A fear of being killed would make most journalists more sympathetic to following the *Public Affairs Guidance on Embedding Media.*

Unlike the restrictive and experimental public-affairs strategies, offensive public-affairs strategy in Iraq turned media embeds into participants in the war. Because the EMP ensured that journalists saw and experienced everything their units saw and experienced, news reports describing American military progress or successful combat operations were used as

facets in a game of psychological warfare whose main goal was to coerce Hussein into taking decisions which were favorable to the U.S. military.

Embedded journalists were also considered an advantage in terms of war morale. After action- and lessons learned reports presented in chapter 4 showed that journalists helped boost soldiers' confidence in themselves and in the mission they were deployed to. First, being interviewed in a newspaper or magazine helped to build up soldiers' confidence in themselves. When portrayed as self-sacrificing young Americans prepared to go to war for the country they loved, for example, many soldiers gained extra courage and fought with much more devotion. Second, journalists helped soldiers and commanders stay in touch with their families and friends. By using journalists' computers and satellite telephones, many soldiers heard encouraging words from home. Being reminded about loved ones back home made soldiers more determined to swiftly reach Operation Iraqi Freedom's goals so they could return home as quickly as possible. Compared to the two other public-affairs strategies examined then, strategic public-affairs strategy not only ensured the military's need for security in the invasion phase of the Iraq War, but also made the operation's goals easier to reach as the strategy used embedded journalists'news reports in their operational strategy as well a mean to keep soldiers' morale high.

5.2 The Press's Ability to Serve as a Check on the Government During Times of Military Engagement

A restrictive public-affairs strategy hindered the press from serving as a check on the government. The news blackout in Grenada is the most severe restriction ever imposed on the press in post-Vietnam military operations. The combination of not being provided with any information and being physically denied access to the island forced journalists to work under conditions found only in dictatorships. The procedure of allowing journalists to access the battlefield only in pools made journalists in both Grenada and the Persian Gulf War highly dependent on military personnel for information. In Grenada and the Persian Gulf War, pool restrictions varied, but both operations share a common feature: being dependent on only one type of source combined with not being allowed to gather information independently culminated in a lack of objective news reports and much inaccurate reporting. Pools can thus be regarded as an instrument for controlling news coverage.

An inability to crosscheck information prevented the press from serving as a check on the government during both the Grenada Invasion and the Persian Gulf War. The true picture of American military's engagement, operations, and the level of success of the war were

hidden from the American people as the military controlled the level of access to the battlefield and the type of information the media were allowed to report on. In Grenada, pools were escorted to the same locations, and were thus actively hindered in gathering any new information. In addition, journalists were not allowed to interview American soldiers, enemy prisoners, or the rescued medical students. The official claim that no planes were allowed to leave Grenada and that the American medical students therefore had to be rescued serves as one of the most striking cases of Americans being misinformed and presented with inaccurate information. In the aftermath of the war, it was revealed that the students were in no real danger and could have left the island on their own without much difficulty. One of President Reagan's three justifications for invading Grenada was thus proved illegitimate. In the Persian Gulf War, the sizes of the press pools and military censorship made journalists dependent on military information provided at briefings at the JIB. News stories based on information received at such briefings reported that U.S. bombing missions against Scud missiles had an eighty percent success rate: in fact, for every bomb that actually hit its target, there had been between seventy to seventy-five misses.

During the Grenada Invasion and the Persian Gulf War, the American people accepted media restrictions. In November and December 1983, fifty-two percent of respondents in the Roper Organization poll answered that they had no difficulty accepting restricted media access in Grenada. In the Persian Gulf War, the gap between the press' claim of little and insufficient information and the American peoples' perception of overall media restrictions was even greater. In January 1991, eighty-eight percent of the participants in the *Time* survey answered that due to the Persian Gulf War's circumstances, they supported some censorship of the press and seventy-nine percent argued that they had been given enough information about the war. The public's support for media restrictions can be linked to Scott Althaus's, Kevin Coe's, and Carolyn A. Lin's arguments that news reports which highlight military accomplishments and progress create patriotism and support for a war. Especially in the Persian Gulf War, pools and censorship contributed to highly glorified news reports of military accomplishments. As Douglas Porch argues, when victory in a war has been achieved, it will "erase the memories of a troubled relationship" and Americans forget how the Johnson administration deceived them in the Vietnam War.[4]

Restrictive public-affairs strategy challenged the very essence of the media business. The size of the pools in both Grenada and the Persian Gulf War made journalists from competing newspapers and magazines dependent upon each other. Sharing valuable information with competing news bureaus would never have taken place during peacetime. To

get more readers and earn more money, an exclusive story is needed. Having to rely on information collected by competitors meant that journalists could never be certain that the information in their possession was correct or of the quality one expects to find in professional, objective news reports. According to the *Washington Post*, in nine of ten cases information which was collected by pools was too superficial to be published.

Compared to restrictive public-affairs strategy, experimental public-affairs strategy provided journalists with greater access to U.S. military units. *DoD Principles for News Media Coverage of DoD Operations Statement of Principles: News Coverage of Combat* and the reathorization of it in 2000, DoD Directive 5122.5 *Statement of DoD Principles for New Media* presented in chapter 3, recognized the media's constitutional right to cover military operations as well as improved the media's access to the battlefield and their working conditions considerably.

Easier access to information did not, however, provide the American people with a true and complete picture of the way in which units experienced the two operations. In both Bosnia and Afghanistan, the American people's knowledge about the operations and military units was compromised when the press was prevented from writing objective news reports. Both during and after Operation Deliberate Force in Bosnia, the American people were exposed to a false picture of the war. In Operation Deliberate Force, the procedure which allowed commanders to decide what kind of information was eligible for publication left the American people with various impressions of U.S. soldiers, commanders and the operation itself. For example, a reader of newspaper "A" would be provided with more or less information then a reader of newspaper "B" or "C".

In addition, the implementation of "Ricks' Rule" prevented journalists from reporting objectively in Bosnia. Because the rule made it easier for journalists to come into contact with military personnel and gather information, many did not condemn the rule. A critical reader, however, might argue that "Ricks' Rule" created a false picture of the war and the military and that the rule severely limited the press's ability to serve as a check on the government. It is understandable and very much accepted that the press is not allowed to publish sensitive and classified information, but when press embeds were for example actively prevented from describing how soldiers experienced the operation and the military's assessment of the level of success, the American people were not provided with a clear picture of the intervention and the Clinton administration could have, in theory, kept the U.S. involved in a operation that a majority of Americans did not want their country to participate in. In practice, "Ricks' Rule" authorized informal military censorship.

Furthermore, the Pentagon's two-pronged public-affairs strategy in Afghanistan provided the American people with much information about the war and combat operations, but this information was neither sufficient nor objective. Being denied access to units for six weeks forced journalists to rely on information published by the Coalition Information Centers. Although the Centers on occasions released information that was not positive, they took advantage of journalists' dependence on military information in the first six weeks. By systematically emphasizing positive incidents and accomplishments, the Pentagon managed news coverage: the Centers' proactive strategy literally undermined the whole notion of having free and independent press. When the first American died from friendly fire, the American people were not informed about the incident until a week later, and the Pentagon thus exploited many Americans faith in their leaders telling them the whole truth of how the war was progressing. Clarke's statement that the American people needed and deserved to hear from their leaders what their country was accomplishing seems to be a dichotomy in that the Pentagon had established a system that systematically highlighted positive aspects of the war effort over negative ones. By not revealing the true picture of the war to journalists, and subsequently not allowing the American people to determine for themselves whether or not their country was to further engage in the war, the essence of a democracy, the people's opinion, was greatly weakened.

Embedding in Afghanistan did not ensure the press' need for information about the War on Terror. To journalists, the embedding procedure created an "incredible amount of press restriction." First, the military and journalists did not agree as to what embedding actually meant. Directive 5122.5 states that independent reporting is to be the principle means employed whenever journalists cover U.S. military operations. But in Afghanistan, press embeds were not allowed to cover military units independently: they were sent out in groups. To journalists, embedding meant spending much time with military units and becoming personally acquainted with soldiers and commanders. However, on only three separate occasions did embeds spend a considerable time with units. Even when journalists were allowed to embed with units for a short period of time - for four to five days - embeds were prevented from talking to American and Afghan soldiers.

Second, the number of journalists that were allowed to embed was too low to cover large-scale operations. In Operation Swift Freedom, five media embeds were supposed to cover 9,000 soldiers from the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marines. The journalists onboard the *USS Peleliu* produced informative news reports, but as they had to cover 1,800 soldiers each, it was difficult gain a complete picture of the operation. That the Pentagon secretly invited just a

few lucky journalists to embed with Army units demonstrates the level of power the Pentagon possessed over the media. In terms of the media's perspective, embedding in Afghanistan reveals how important it is to have pre-established ground rules which clearly state the media's rights when covering a war. Similar to "Ricks' Rule", the ground rules in Afghanistan made the media wholly subordinate to the military during military operations.

As with the case of restrictive public-affairs, the *USA Today*/*Gallup* poll reveals that even though journalists and press embeds believed that the American people were not informed adequately about the Afghanistan War, the American people did not have any problem making up their minds as to whether American military engagement in Afghanistan was a mistake after having American forces stationed in the country for two months. An alternative interpretation of the results from the polls is that the Coaltition Inforamantion Centers's preemptive approach actually worked. Whenever positive stories about military engagement in Afghanistan were systematically highlighted, Americans' perceptions of the war were influenced. As the Vietnam War had shown, as long as people are exposed to positive war information, public support for the war will remain high.

Strategic public-affairs strategy in Iraq provided embedded journalists with access to information on an unprecedented scale. Sixty percent of journalists participating in the *Pew Research Center* survey believed that the EMP had provided them with an unprecedented opportunity to access places and meet military personnel they otherwise would not have had if they had covered the invasion as unilaterals. Because the press embeds of *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* were aware of the possibility that they could lose their objectivity and, indeed, actively refused to adhere to the Pentagon's official version of events, they only served as a check on the Bush administration in terms of the way in which the war was progressing. Because media embeds only covered how the war was progressing and how their units experienced the invasion, they could not, for example, produce investigative reports about whether or not Hussein had actually acquired the nuclear arms the Bush administration claimed he had or report on how civilian Iraqis experienced the invasion.

Although press embeds were not able to cover all aspects of the invasion and thus did not serve as a complete check on the government, strategic public-affairs strategy in the form of the EMP gave journalists the opportunity to see for themselves whether or not the invasion phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom was successful in terms of combat success. As one anonymous bureau chief stated in a survey conducted by the Institute for Defense Analyses, the EMP allows the American people to see how "American dollars and blood are being expended." An evaluation of combat achievements is the first marker as to whether an

operation is successful or not. It is therefore crucial that journalists are provided with access to units and the battlefield. If journalists had not been embedded with units and the invasion had failed, the Bush administration would, as the examination of earlier public-affairs strategies has revealed, have had no significant problem with de-emphasizing lost battles, combat and soldiers killed by friendly fire. If the invasion turned out to be a major failure and journalists were not actively engaging with soldiers and commanders on the battlefield, a credibility gap, similar to the one that developed in the Vietnam War, could emerge if President Bush sought to carry on with the war of his own choosing.

News reports written by press embeds did not provide the American people with a complete picture of the war. Andrew Lindner's paper *Among the Troops: Seeing the Iraq War Through Three Journalistic Vantage Points* reveals that news reports written by press embeds were largely biased and did not contribute to a broad and encompassing picture of the invasion. Of 742 printed news articles, 690.6 had soldiers as their main source. 274.5 articles focused on how soldiers experienced the war, while only eighty-five mentioned civilian casualties. This lack of emphasis on the Iraqi civilian aspect of the invasion is reconfirmed by a *Project for Excellence in Journalism* survey. Of 111 journalists (of whom ninety-four had been embedded), ninety-one responded that American units had received the best coverage while 68.8 believed that ordinary Iraqis had received too little coverage.

The research-paper's hypothesis is then fully tested and proved partly right in its assumption. Strategic public-affairs strategy did not jeopardize military operational strategy and security, but the press were not able serve as a complete check on the government because press embeds were attached to the military units at all times and were thus not able to engage in investigative journalism during the invasion phase of the Iraq War. Embedded journalists were, however, able to serve as a check in terms of war-progress to a much more satisfying degree than what restrictive and experimental public-affairs strategy had previously allowed. Because press embeds were attached to the units, strategic public-affairs strategy did not provide Americans with a total picture of the war. But that U.S. military units received more coverage than what Iraqi civilians did can, however, not be used as a criticism of the EMP. The EMP was designed to give journalists detailed and high-quality news reports about units and their participation in the invasion, not provide a broad and comprehensive account of the whole invasion. A week into the invasion, the American people were informed by Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld that the EMP was not designed to reflect the broader picture. Editors participating in the *Institute for Defense Analyses* survey acknowledged that they, and not the military, were responsible for providing the American people with a broad view of the

invasion phase in OIF. If newspapers and television stations wants to be considered professional and objective media actors, it is the editors and managers that are ultimately responsible for exposing their readers and viewers to multiple points of views. The number of unilaterals in Iraq exceeded the number of media embeds. But because the research-paper has not been able to locate any surveys that focus on how unilateral news reports influenced the American people's perception of the Iraq war, it is impossible for this paper to provide an answer to whether the combination unilateral-press embed news reports actually provided the American people with an encompassing picture of the war.

5.3 The Pentagon and Commanders Influence Public-Affairs Strategy

A disastrous public-affairs strategy in Vietnam and a tarnished military reputation gave way to a new military way of perceiving news coverage of military operations. A characteristic shared by the Persian Gulf War, the Bosnia intervention, the Afghanistan war, and the invasion phase of the Iraq War is that in addition to securing operational strategy and security, the Pentagon and commanders, in varying degrees, have used public-affairs strategies as an instrument to improve the U.S military's reputation and separate military engagement from political goals and incentives. In comparison to the Pentagon and U.S. Marine commanders, U.S. Army commanders have been slower to recognize and value the advantages media coverage provides. The Persian Gulf War served as a turning point in terms of how U.S. Army commanders regarded media coverage and since the Bosnia Intervention, U.S. Army commanders have embraced media coverage. Army commanders have thus served as a negative as well as a positive influential factor.

First, setting aside the need for operational security, military public-affairs strategy serves as an indicator of how the Pentagon and commanders have experienced media coverage. The Pentagon and commanders have gone through a learning process in terms of how they regard media coverage and journalists. Whenever a military operation has been successful, and as long as the nature of the operation has allowed it, journalists have been given increased access to the battlefield and combat units in the subsequent operation. After learning that news coverage can present military accomplishments favorably, each new public-affairs strategy has become more accommodating that the preceding one and ground rules, staring with the *DoD Principles for News Media Coverage of DoD Operations* in 1992, have gradually emphasized a military obligation of providing adequate journalistic access and support journalists on the battlefield.

A major lesson learned in the Grenada Invasion was that if journalists were placed under heavy restrictions, the military would not receive the praise they believed they deserved and were instead turned into "the bad guys" as they had been after the Vietnam War. When restricted, journalists emphasized the negative traits in military organization instead of focusing on the operation's progress. A desire for positive media coverage combined with a new war environment produced a less restrictive public-affairs strategy in the Persian Gulf War. The *National Media Pool* program was designed to allow journalists to witness and report on media accomplishments and bravery. The program did secure some positive coverage, but journalistic access to the battlefield was considered inadequate, leading to the old and highly unflattering characterization of the military as protectionist and uncooperative being sustained. The U.S. Army's routine knowledge assets in combination with insufficient resources and a lack of attention on public affairs during the planning stage of the war produced difficult working conditions for journalists, resulting ultimately in less coverage than had been anticipated and wished for. After the Persian Gulf War, the U.S. Marines' use of news coverage became a source of inspiration. Media coverage had increased soldiers' morale, combat was given much coverage, and journalists had formed a positive image of the Marines.

Unlike previous military operations, U.S. Army commanders invited journalists to embed with units in Bosnia, hoping that it would create a more professional picture of Army soldiers. A continuance of using public-affairs strategy to improve military reputation can be identified in the Afghanistan War, during which commanders played a more prominent role in securing positive news coverage than the Pentagon. U.S. Marine commanders, adhering to their tradition of welcoming journalists, allowed five journalists to embed during Operation Swift Freedom without securing the Pentagon's consent. Despite a negative encounter with media coverage in Bosnia, U.S. Army finally broke its old pattern of animosity toward the media in the Afghanistan War. Army commanders learned that journalists, despite being placed under restrictions, produced positive and engaging news reports about military participation and professionalism when they had a first-hand view of what it was like to be a soldier at war.

Drawing on experiences made in Bosnia and Afghanistan, U.S. Army commanders in Iraq were the first ones to recognize the importance of using news coverage as an instrument for separating military engagement from the political aspect of the controversial invasion. The Pentagon's ground rules for the *Embedded Media Program* secured journalists close and personal access to military units. The Pentagon's initiative to allow journalists to experience

military life at boot camps before deployment enhanced both journalists' understanding and the military's respect for and knowledge about their former wartime enemy. Journalists engaging with soldiers for twenty-four hours a day for long periods of time wrote positive and gripping stories and news reports about the hardships of being a soldier at war and what kinds of sacrifices soldiers made to secure American victory. Providing journalists with full access to units in Iraq led to the military's once tarnished and battered reputation being transformed into a highly positive and praiseworthy reputation.

Second, the Pentagon and commanders have supported journalistic presence on the battlefield when media-military relations have been strained. After Operation Deliberate Force in Bosnia, the Pentagon, supported by commanders, sought to prevent Army soldiers from reverting to their old habit of perceiving news coverage as a mere liability. When Thomas E. Ricks' less flattering article was published, the Army witnessed that the attitude of military staff to media coverage relapsed and once again became more negative. But unlike soldiers who often saw no point in talking to journalists, the Pentagon and commanders evaluated a journalistic presence based on the way in which this had affected the military as a whole. Media coverage had helped to separate military activities from American political involvement and, except for Fontenot's racist comment, coverage had mostly presented soldiers as professional and very dedicated. Although the Pentagon's implementation of "Ricks' Rule" favored soldiers more than it did journalists, the rule prevented hostile routine knowledge assets from taking root among military personnel.

5.4 Presidents Influence Public-Affairs Strategy

In his famed book *Democracy in America* Alexis de Tocqueville argues that foreign policy is the Achilles heel of any democracy and that defects of democratic institutions will be revealed when foreign affairs are conducted.[5] Since the days of President George Washington, presidents have met many Americans psychological needs.[6] Americans have especially turned to their president for comfort and reassurance in times of crisis demanding military engagement. Public opinion polls and surveys reviewed in this research paper have revealed that in the four cases where presidents have used American security as a justification for military activity, Americans have supported the military operation in question. In the Grenada Invasion, the Persian Gulf War, the Afghanistan War, and the Iraq War, Americans did not object to the various public-affairs strategies advocated by presidents and implemented by the Pentagon, despite that the strategies, to various degrees, have violated the American Constitution's principle of a free American press. Patriotism and the American people's

reliance upon their Commander-in Chief thus serve as two Achilles heels in American democracy. The Bosnia Intervention, for example, did not receive as high favourability rate as the Grenada Invasion, the Persian Gulf War, the Afghanistan War, and the Iraq War. As revealed in the Gallup poll *American Public Support for U.S. Military Operations from Mogadishu to Bagdad* presented in chapter 3, Americans did not believe that American interests were threatened in the Bosnia-Herzegovina civil war and thus did not support American military participation in Operation Deliberate Force. The average favorability rate of the Grenada Invasion, the Persian Gulf War, the Afghanistan War, and the Iraq War is seventy percent while only forty-one percent supported American military activity in Bosnia.[7] These diverging numbers indicate that when Americans believe that their security or interests are threatened, the majority turns to the highest ranking military officer in the U.S and will not object to media restrictions on the battlefield.

Because Americans "rally-around-the-flag" when security is threatened, presidents have been able to use patriotic war environments for their own political advantages. A shared characteristic of President Bush Sr. and President Bush Jr's presidencies during wartime is their use of military public-affairs strategies to build support for their own political agendas as well as the operation in question. A restrictive public-affairs strategy in the Persian Gulf War was deemed desirable by Bush Sr. on two counts, both linked to his desire to build a "new world order". First, if the Persian Gulf War was to be used as means to attract more public support for his presidency and his future political goals, the media had to be prevented from reporting on sensitive war information that could be used to the Iraqis' advantage. Also, if Americans learned about less successful or failed operations, this might first of all influence their overall opinion of the war Bush was waging in their name. Second, an unsuccessful war could also make Americans question Bush's presidency and his political skills. For Bush, losing the war or being forced to withdraw from it would result in the loss of much needed political foreign-affairs capital. Without political capital, his vision of a "new world order" would never come to fruition.

President Bush Jr. used strategic public-affairs strategy as a means to sell the Iraq War. Bush's decision to go to war against Saddam Hussein was part of a larger political agenda: he claimed he was going to war to eradicate terrorism, especially terrorism directed at the United States. Many others believed that securing America's oil supply was equally the reason, and that the Bush administration's other justifications for invading Iraq were rather dubious. Whether Bush went to war in Iraq to secure U.S. access to oil is true or not, there is no doubt that strategic public-affairs strategy, as Johnson's *Maximum Candor* strategy in the Vietnam

War, was designed to dominate media coverage, counter enemy propaganda in the invasion phase and secure public support. Bush's attempt to secure public support during Operation Iraqi Freedom can be considered a success when considering the war's favorability rates in late March and late April 2003. Media embeds published detailed news reports describing military progress and soldiers' heroic war efforts and professionalism, thereby creating a patriotic mood in the United States.

The second category of the way in which presidents have influenced public-affairs strategy is represented by President Reagan, who allowed his own presidential style to influence the military's public-affairs strategy in the Grenada Invasion. His unilateral view of a prerogative war president combined with his distaste for free governmental information did not directly influence military public-affairs strategy during the Grenada Invasion as Johnson's *Maximum Candor* had done in Vietnam: rather he sought to ensure that General John W. Vessey Jr., Admiral Wesley L. McDonald, and Vice Admiral Joseph Metcalf III were given free hands when planning the invasion. A Commander-in-Chief who disliked a free stream of information and advocated prerogative rights during wartime combined with the military's desire for little media coverage produced an extremely restrictive public affairs strategy during the Grenada Invasion.

5.5 Concluding Remarks

Because of the media-military culture clash, Americans have to choose between a free and independent press, which is one of the cornerstones in a democracy, and military success. Between 1983 and 2001, Americans have chosen the latter. During the invasion phase of the Iraq War, however, they did not have to choose between the two options as the *Embedding Media Program* allowed the military to fulfill its role as protector of American security and embedded journalists were partly, but still at a satisfactory level, able to fulfill its role as a protector of American democratic values. Because battlefield environments change from operation to operation, however, there is no guarantee that Americans will never again have to choose. If Americans stay true to their tradition of supporting their President and Commander-in-Chief during times of crisis demanding military engagement, the press will most likely continue to serve the position of the underdog, once again fighting for democratic values which large sections of the population of the best known proponent of democratic values in the world do not seem to value at times of military engagement.

Appendix A

OPERATION DESERT SHIELD/STORM GROUND RULES AND GUIDELINES FOR NEWS MEDIA

The following information should not be reported because its publication or broadcast could jeopardize operations and endanger lives:

1. For U.S. or coalition units, specific numerical information on troop strength, aircraft, weapons systems, on-hand equipment or supplies (e.g., artillery, tanks, radars, missiles, trucks, water), including amounts of ammunition or fuel moved by or on hand in support and combat units. Unit size may be described in general terms, such as "company-size," "multibattalion," "multidivision," "naval task force" and "carrier battle group." Number or amount of equipment and supplies may be described in general terms, such as "large," "small" or "many."

2. Any information that reveals details of future plans, operations or strikes, including postponed or cancelled operations.

3. Information, photography and imagery that would reveal the specific location of military forces or show the level of security at military installations or encampments. Locations maybe described as follows: all Navy embark stories can identify the ship upon which embarked as a dateline and will state that the report is coming from the "Persian Gulf," "Red Sea" or "North Arabian Sea." Stories written in Saudi Arabia maybe datelined "Eastern Saudi Arabia," "Near the Kuwaiti border," etc. For specific countries outside Saudi Arabia, stories will state that the report is coming from the Persian Gulf region unless that country has acknowledged its participation.

4. Rules of engagement details.

5. Information on intelligence collection activities, including targets, methods and results.

6. During an operation, specific information on friendly force troop movements, tactical deployments and dispositions that would jeopardize operational security or lives. This would include designations, names of operations and size of friendly forces involved, until released by CENTCOM.

7. Identification of mission aircraft points of origin, other than as land- or carrier-based.

8. Information on the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of enemy camouflage, cover, deception, targeting, direct and indirect fire, intelligence collection or security measures.

9. Specific identifying information on missing or downed aircraft or ships while search and rescue operations are planned or under way.

10. Special operations forces' methods, unique equipment or tactics.

11. Specific operating methods and tactics, (e.g., air angles of attack or speeds, or naval tactics and evasive maneuvers). General terms, such as "low" or "fast," may be used.

12. Information on operational or support vulnerabilities that could be used against U.S. forces, such as details of major battle damage or major personnel losses of specific U.S. or coalition units, until that information no longer provides tactical advantage to the enemy and is, therefore, released by CENTCOM. Damage and casualties may be described as "light," "moderate" or "heavy."

News media personnel must carry and support any personal and professional gear they take with them, including protective cases for professional equipment, batteries, cables, converters, etc.

Night Operations—Light discipline restrictions will be followed. The only approved light source is a flashlight with a red lens. No visible light source, including flash or television lights, will be used when operating with forces at night unless specifically approved by the on-scene commander.

Because of host-nation requirements, you must stay with your public affairs escort while on Saudi bases. At other U.S. tactical or field locations and encampments, a public affairs escort maybe required because of security, safely and mission requirements as determined by the host commander.

Casualty information, because of concern of the notification of the next of kin, is extremely sensitive. By executive directive, next of kin of all military fatalities must be notified in person by a uniformed member of the appropriate service. There have been instances in which the next of kin have first learned of the death or wounding of a loved one though the news media. The problem is particularly difficult for visual media. Casualty photographs showing a recognizable face, name tag or other identifying feature or item should not be used before the next of kin have been notified. The anguish that sudden recognition at home can cause far outweighs the news value of the photograph, film or videotape. News coverage of casualties in medical centers will be in strict compliance with the instructions of doctors and medical officers.

To the extent that individuals in the news media seek access to the U.S. area of operation, the following rule applies: Prior to or upon commencement of hostilities, media pools will be established to provide initial combat coverage of U.S. forces. U.S. news media personnel present in Saudi Arabia will be given the opportunity to join CENTCOM media pools, providing they agree to pool their products. News media personnel who are not members of the official CENTCOM media pools will not be permitted into forward areas, Reporters are strongly discouraged from attempting to link up on their own with combat units. U.S. commanders will maintain extremely tight security throughout the operational area and will exclude from the area of operation all unauthorized individuals.

For news media personnel participating in designated CENTVOM media pools:

1. Upon registering with the JIB, news media should contact their respective pool coordinator for an explanation of pool operations.

2. In the event of hostilities, pool products will be subject to review before release to determine if they contain sensitive information about military plans, capabilities, operation or vulnerabilities (see attached ground rules) that would jeopardize the outcome of an operation or the safety of U.S. or coalition forces. Material will be examined solely for its conformance to the attached ground rules, not for its potential to express criticism or cause embarrassment. The public affairs escort officer on scene will review pool reports, discuss ground rule problems with the reporter, and in the limited circumstances when no agreement can be reached with a reporter about disputed materials, immediately send the disputed materials to JIB Dhahran for review by the JIB Director and the appropriate news media representative. If no agreement can be reached, the issue will be immediately forwarded to OASD(PA) for review with the appropriate bureau chief. The ultimate decision on publication will be made by the originating reporter's news organization.

3. Correspondents may not carry a personnel weapon.

Appendix B

DoD Principles for News Media Coverage of DoD Operations

The following principles have been adopted by representatives of major American news media and the Pentagon to be followed in any future combat situation involving American troops.

1. Open and independent reporting will be the principal means of coverage of U.S. military operations.

2. Pools are not to serve as the standard for covering U.S. military operations. But pools may sometimes provide the only feasible means of early access to a military operation. Pools should be as large as possible and disbanded at the earliest opportunity- within 24-36 hours when possible. The arrival of early-access pools will not cancel the principle of independent coverage for journalists already in the area.

3. Even under conditions of open coverage, pools may be appropriate for specific events, such as those at extremely remote locations or where space is limited.

4. Journalists in a combat zone will be credentialed by the U.S. military and will be required to abide by a clear set of military security ground rules that protect U.S. forces and their operations. Violations of the ground rules can result in suspension of the credentials and expulsion from the combat zone of the journalists involved. News organizations will make their best effort to assign experienced journalists to combat operations and to make them familiar with U.S. military operations.

5. Journalists will be provided access to all major military units. Special Operations restrictions may limit access in some cases

6. Military public affairs officers should act as liaisons but should not interfere with the reporting process.

7. Under conditions of open coverage, field commanders will permit journalists to ride on military vehicles and aircrafts whenever feasible. The military will be responsible for the transportation of pools.

8. Consistent with its capabilities, the military will supply PAOs with facilities to enable timely, secure compatible transmission of pool material and will make these facilities available whenever possible for filing independent coverage. In cases when government facilities are unavailable, journalists will, as always, file by any other means available. The military will not ban communications systems operated by news organizations, but electromagnetic operational security in battlefield situations may require limited restrictions on the use of such systems.

9. These principle will apply as well to the operations of the standing DOD National Media Pool System.

Appendix C

Ground Rules Agreement; Operation Enduring Freedom, Afghanistan

The following is a listing of ground rules which have been developed to protect members of the Armed Services from the release of information which could potentially threaten their security or safety during ongoing operations.

These ground rules recognize the inherent Constitutional right of the media to cover military operations and are in no way intended to prevent release of derogatory, embarrassing, negative or non-complimentary information. During an operation or exercise, specific information on friendly force troop movements, tactical deployments and dispositions that would jeopardize operational security or lives will not be released. This would include unit designations, names of operations, and size of friendly forces involved, until released by USCENTCOM or its designated release authority. Acceptance of these ground rules is an agreement between you and the granting commands. You agree to follow the ground rules and the command will provide support, access to military members, information and other privileges. Violation of ground rules, however, may result in the revocation of your credentials.

News media personnel must carry and support any personal and professional gear they take with them, including protective cases for professional equipment, batteries, cables, converters, etc. Media members should be physically fit and prepared to withstand the rigorous conditions required to operate in a desert environment.

1. All interviews with soldiers will be on the record. Security at the interview source is the policy. Interviews with pilots and aircrew members are authorized upon completion of missions; however, release of information must conform to media ground rules.

2. Print or broadcast stories will be datelined by general geographical description such as northern Arabian Peninsula, Northern Arabian Gulf, etc. No specific locations will be used when filing stories.

3. Because of host-nation requirements, media must stay with public affairs escorts while on host nation bases. At other U.S. tactical or field locations and encampments, a public affairs escort may be required because of security, safety and mission requirements as determined by the host commander. Media will remain with military escorts at all times until released, and follow instructions regarding their activities.

4. Media will not carry personal weapons.

5. External Media Coverage of Detainees:

5A. Group or wide area photo/video coverage of detainees in and about detainee facilities may be permitted by the camp commander, subject to security requirements and the following restrictions:

5B. Media coverage, including photo/video coverage, will not identify detainees by name or by image. (i.e., close up images of individual face(s) that would allow individuals to be identified will not be permitted.).

5C. Coverage may show groups of detainees, but only in compliance with the restrictions in Para. 5B.

5D. Coverage of detainees in transit is not permitted, including ground and air movement between detention facilities, or movement between detention facilities and transportation (buses, ferries, planes, etc).

6. Coverage of detainee interrogations or interviews is not permitted. Media interviews with detainees are not permitted.

7. Media will not capture imagery of deployed Special Operations Forces (SOF) without prior approval through USCENTCOM in co-ordination with USSOCOM.

8. The following categories of information are not releasable since their publication or broadcast could jeopardize operations and endanger lives.

a. For U.S. or coalition units, specific numerical information on troop strength, equipment or critical supplies (e.g. artillery, tanks, landing craft, radar, trucks, water etc.).

b. Specific number of aircraft in units below wing level, or identification of mission aircraft points of origin, other than land or carrier based. Number and type of aircraft may be described in very general terms such as "large flight," "small flight," "many," "few," "fighters," "fixed wing," etc.

c. Names of military installations or specific geographic locations of military units in the USCENTCOM area of responsibility, unless specifically released by the Department of Defense.

d. Information regarding future operations, current operations or strikes including postponed or cancelled operations, or information regarding security precautions at military installations or encampments.

e. Photography that would show level of security at military installations or encampments, especially aerial and satellite photography which would reveal the name or specific location of military units or installations.

f. Details of rules of engagement.

g. Information on intelligence collection activities including targets, methods and results.

h. Information on special operations units, unique operations methodology or tactics, for example, air operations, angles of attack, and speeds; naval tactical or evasive maneuvers, etc. General terms such as "low" or "fast" may be used.

i. Information on effectiveness of enemy electronic warfare.

j. Information on effectiveness of enemy camouflage and cover.

k. Additional guidelines may be necessary to protect tactical security.

9. The following categories of information are releasable.

a. Arrival of U.S. military units in the USCENTCOM area of responsibility when officially announced. Mode of travel (sea or air), dates of departure and home station.

b. Approximate friendly force strength figures.

c. Non-sensitive, unclassified information regarding U.S. air, ground and sea operations, past and present.

d. Size of friendly force participating in an action or operation will be disclosed using general terms such as "multi-battalion." Specific force or unit identification may be released when it no longer warrants security protection.

e. Generic description of origin of air operations, such as "land-based."

f. Date, time or location of previous conventional military missions and actions as well as mission results.

g. Types of ordnance expended in general terms.

h. Number of aerial combat or reconnaissance missions or sorties flown in USCENTCOM's area of operation.

i. Type of forces involved (e.g., air defence, infantry, armour, Marines).
j. Weather and climate conditions.

k Allied participation by type of operation (ships, aircraft, ground units, etc.), after approval of host nation government.

l. Conventional operation code names.

m. Names and hometowns of U.S. military units or individuals.

Appendix D

Excerpt of *Public Affairs (PA) Guidance on Embedding Media During Possible Future Operations/Deployments in the U.S. Central Command* (CENTCOM) *Area of Responsibility* (AOR)

2. POLICY.

2.A. THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (DOD) POLICY ON MEDIA COVERAGE OF FUTURE MILITARY OPERATIONS IS THAT MEDIA WILL HAVE LONG-TERM, MINIMALLY RESTRICTIVE ACCESS TO U.S. AIR, GROUND AND NAVAL FORCES THROUGH EMBEDDING. MEDIA COVERAGE OF ANY FUTURE OPERATION WILL, TO A LARGE EXTENT, SHAPE PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT NOW AND IN THE YEARS AHEAD. THIS HOLDS TRUE FOR THE U.S. PUBLIC; THE PUBLIC IN ALLIED COUNTRIES WHOSE OPINION CAN AFFECT THE DURABILITY OF OUR COALITION; AND PUBLICS IN COUNTRIES WHERE WE CONDUCT OPERATIONS, WHOSE PERCEPTIONS OF US CAN AFFECT THE COST AND DURATION OF OUR INVOLVEMENT. OUR ULTIMATE STRATEGIC SUCCESS IN BRINGING PEACE AND SECURITY TO THIS REGION WILL COME IN OUR LONG-TERM COMMITMENT TO SUPPORTING OUR DEMOCRATIC IDEALS. WE NEED TO TELL THE FACTUAL STORY - GOOD OR BAD - BEFORE OTHERS SEED THE MEDIA WITH DISINFORMATION AND DISTORTIONS, AS THEY MOST CERTAINLY WILL CONTINUE TO DO. OUR PEOPLE IN THE FIELD NEED TO TELL OUR STORY – ONLY COMMANDERS CAN ENSURE THE MEDIA GET TO THE STORY ALONGSIDE THE TROOPS. WE MUST ORGANIZE FOR AND FACILITATE ACCESS OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA TO OUR FORCES, INCLUDING THOSE FORCES ENGAGED IN GROUND OPERATIONS, WITH THE GOAL OF DOING SO RIGHT FROM THE START. TO ACCOMPLISH THIS, WE WILL EMBED MEDIA WITH OUR UNITS. THESE EMBEDDED MEDIA WILL LIVE, WORK AND TRAVEL AS PART OF THE UNITS WITH WHICH THEY ARE EMBEDDED TO FACILITATE MAXIMUM, IN-DEPTH COVERAGE OF U.S. FORCES IN COMBAT AND RELATED OPERATIONS. COMMANDERS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICERS MUST WORK TOGETHER TO BALANCE THE NEED FOR MEDIA ACCESS WITH THE NEED FOR OPERATIONAL SECURITY.

2.C. A MEDIA EMBED IS DEFINED AS A MEDIA REPRESENTATIVE REMAINING WITH A UNIT ON AN EXTENDED BASIS - PERHAPS A PERIOD OF WEEKS OR EVEN MONTHS. COMMANDERS WILL PROVIDE BILLETING, RATIONS AND MEDICAL ATTENTION, IF NEEDED, TO THE EMBEDDED MEDIA COMMENSURATE WITH THAT PROVIDED TO MEMBERS OF THE UNIT, AS WELL AS ACCESS TO MILITARY TRANSPORTATION AND ASSISTANCE WITH COMMUNICATIONS FILING/TRANSMITTING MEDIA PRODUCTS, IF REQUIRED.

2.C.1. EMBEDDED MEDIA ARE NOT AUTHORIZED USE OF THEIR OWN VEHICLES WHILE TRAVELING IN AN EMBEDDED STATUS.

2.C.4. NO COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT FOR USE BY MEDIA IN THE

CONDUCT OF THEIR DUTIES WILL BE SPECIFICALLY PROHIBITED. HOWEVER, UNIT COMMANDERS MAY IMPOSE TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS ON ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSIONS FOR OPERATIONAL SECURITY REASONS. MEDIA WILL SEEK APPROVAL TO USE ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN A COMBAT/HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT, UNLESS OTHERWISE DIRECTED BY THE UNIT COMMANDER OR HIS/HER DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE. THE USE OF COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT WILL BE DISCUSSED IN FULL WHEN THE MEDIA ARRIVE AT THEIR ASSIGNED UNIT.

3. PROCEDURES.

3.A. THE OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS (OASD(PA) IS THE CENTRAL AGENCY FOR MANAGING AND VETTING MEDIA EMBEDS TO INCLUDE ALLOCATING EMBED SLOTS TO MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS. EMBED AUTHORITY MAY BE DELEGATED TO SUBORDINATE ELEMENTS AFTER THE COMMENCEMENT OF HOSTILITIES AND AT THE DISCRETION OF OASD(PA). EMBED OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE ASSIGNED TO MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS, NOT TO INDIVIDUAL REPORTERS. THE DECISION AS TO WHICH MEDIA REPRESENTATIVE WILL FILL ASSIGNED EMBED SLOTS WILL BE MADE BY THE DESIGNATED POC FOR EACH NEWS ORGANIZATION.

3.C. UNIT COMMANDERS SHOULD ALSO EXPRESS, THROUGH THEIR CHAIN OF COMMAND AND PA CHANNELS TO OASD(PA), THEIR DESIRE AND CAPABILITY TO SUPPORT ADDITIONAL MEDIA EMBEDS BEYOND THOSE ASSIGNED.

3.F. EMBEDDED MEDIA OPERATE AS PART OF THEIR ASSIGNED UNIT. AN ESCORT MAY BE ASSIGNED AT THE DISCRETION OF THE UNIT COMMANDER. THE ABSENCE OF A PA ESCORT IS NOT A REASON TO PRECLUDE MEDIA ACCESS TO OPERATIONS.

3.G. COMMANDERS WILL ENSURE THE MEDIA ARE PROVIDED WITH EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO OBSERVE ACTUAL COMBAT OPERATIONS. THE PERSONAL SAFETY OF CORRESPONDENTS IS NOT A REASON TO EXCLUDE THEM FROM COMBAT AREAS.

3.P. MEDIA WILL DEPLOY WITH THE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT TO COLLECT AND TRANSMIT THEIR STORIES.

4. GROUND RULES.

FOR THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF U.S. FORCES AND EMBEDDED MEDIA, MEDIA WILL ADHERE TO ESTABLISHED GROUND RULES. GROUND RULES WILL BE AGREED TO IN ADVANCE AND SIGNED BY MEDIA PRIOR TO EMBEDDING. VIOLATION OF THE GROUND RULES MAY RESULT IN THE IMMEDIATE TERMINATION OF THE EMBED AND REMOVAL FROM THE AOR. THESE GROUND RULES RECOGNIZE THE RIGHT OF THE MEDIA TO COVER MILITARY OPERATIONS AND ARE IN NO WAY INTENDED TO PREVENT RELEASE OF DEROGATORY, EMBARRASSING, NEGATIVE OR UNCOMPLIMENTARY INFORMATION. ANY MODIFICATION TO THE STANDARD GROUND RULES WILL

BE FORWARDED THROUGH THE PA CHANNELS TO CENTCOM/PA FOR APPROVAL. STANDARD GROUND RULES ARE:

4.A. ALL INTERVIEWS WITH SERVICE MEMBERS WILL BE ON THE RECORD. SECURITY AT THE SOURCE IS THE POLICY. INTERVIEWS WITH PILOTS AND AIRCREW MEMBERS ARE AUTHORIZED UPON COMPLETION OF MISSIONS; HOWEVER, RELEASE OF INFORMATION MUST CONFORM TO THESE MEDIA GROUND RULES.

4.B. PRINT OR BROADCAST STORIES WILL BE DATELINED ACCORDING TO LOCAL GROUND RULES. LOCAL GROUND RULES WILL BE COORDINATED THROUGH COMMAND CHANNELS WITH CENTCOM.
4.C. MEDIA EMBEDDED WITH U.S. FORCES ARE NOT PERMITTED TO CARRY PERSONAL FIREARMS.

4.D. LIGHT DISCIPLINE RESTRICTIONS WILL BE FOLLOWED. VISIBLE LIGHT SOURCES, INCLUDING FLASH OR TELEVISION LIGHTS, FLASH CAMERAS WILL NOT BE USED WHEN OPERATING WITH FORCES AT NIGHT UNLESS SPECIFICALLY APPROVED IN ADVANCE BY THE ON-SCENE COMMANDER.

REGARDING OTHER EQUIPMENT OR CRITICAL SUPPLIES (E.G. ARTILLERY, TANKS, LANDING CRAFT, RADARS, TRUCKS, WATER, ETC.).

List of Acronyms

CENTCOM – U.S. Central Commands
CIC – Coalition Information Center
CINCLANT – Commander In Chief, Atlantic
EMP – Embedded Media Program
JIB – Joint Information Bureau
JP 3-0 – Doctrine for Joint Operations
JUSPAO – Joint United States Public Affairs Office
MACOI – Military Assistance Office of Information
MACV – Military Assistance Command Vietnam
NMP – National Media Pool program
OA – Operation Anaconda
ODF – Operation Deliberate Force
OEF – Operation Enduring Freedom
OIF – Operation Iraqi Freedom
OSF – Operation Swift Freedom
OUF – Operation Urgent Fury
PAO – Public Affairs Officer
PEJ – Project for Excellence in Journalism
PRA – The Peoples Revolutionary Army
RCFP – Reporters' Committee for Freedom of the Press
TTP – Tactics, Techniques and Procedures

Notes

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[110] Baggio 2006, 4
[111] Ibid
[112] Rid 2007, 112
[113]*Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) Lessons Learned*. 1st Marine Divison, May 2003. http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2003/1mardiv_oif_lessons_learned.doc (As of April 29 2009)
[114] The Fedayeen ("Saddam's Men of Sacrifice"), was a paramilitary unit of irregular forces and it reported directly to Saddam Hussein. The Fedayeen was among the most loyal organization of Saddam Hussein and were a politically reliable force against domestic opponents. For more information see "Q&A: What is the Fedayeen Saddam?" *The New York Times* March 25 2003 http://www.nytimes.com/cfr/international/backgroundiraq2032503.html (As of March 9 2009)
[115] For more information see "What is a War Crime?" *BBC News* July 22 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/1420133.stm (As of March 9 2009)
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[117] *Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) Lessons Learned* 2003, 34
[118] Ibid, 35
[119] Ibid
[120] Ibid
[121] *The Third Infantry Division (Mechanized) After Action Report Operation Iraqi Freedom* 2003, 42 http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2003/3id-aar-jul03.pdf (As of April 29 2009)
[122] Ibid, 40
[123] Ibid, 44
[124] Ibid, 42
[125] Lindner 2006, 16
[126] *Project for Excellence in Journalism* "Journalists in Iraq- A Survey of Reporters on the From Lines" November 28, 2007 http://www.journalism.org/node/8645 (As of April 29 2009)
[127]Wright 2004, III-7
[128] Ibid, III-3
[129] Ibid, III-4
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Chapter 5 Analysis

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[2] Aukofer 1995, 24
[3] Rear Admiral Steven Pietropapli quoted in *The media and the war on terrorism* eds Stephen Hess and Marvin Klab The Brookings Institution 2003, 93
[4] Douglas Porch "No Bad Stories" 2002 http://ics.leeds.ac.uk/papers/vp01.cfm?outfit=pmt&folder=34&paper=1613 (As of April 24 2009)
4 Alexis de Tocqueville quoted in *A CONTENT ANALYSIS: International News Coverage Fits Public's Ameri-Centric Mood, The Pew Research Center* October 31 1995, 3 http://people-press.org/reports/pdf/19951031.pdf (As of May 6 2009)
[5] Joseph A Pika *The Politics of the Presidency* CQ Press 2008
[6]Numbers retracted from Terry Nardin and Kathleen D. Pritchard *Ethics and Intervention: The United States in Grenada, 1983*, Mary Beth Oliver and Marie-Louise Mares "News Viewing, Autoritarianism, and Attitudes Toward the Gulf War" in *The Media and the Persian Gulf War*, David W. Moore "Americans Divided on U.S:Troops In Bosnia", *USA Today/Gallup* Poll March 14-15 2009, and Dooley 2008. Favorability rate in the invasion phase of the Iraq war is the average rate of participants answering that the invasion went "very well" and "quite well".

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